

**EMOTION AND LANGUAGE  
LEARNING: AN EXPLORATION OF  
EXPERIENCE AND MOTIVATION IN  
A MEXICAN UNIVERSITY CONTEXT**

**Mariza Guadalupe Méndez López, M.A.**

**Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**December 2011**

## **Abstract**

Although there have been numerous studies on motivation in foreign language learning and on emotions in general education, little research in foreign language learning have focused on the relation between motivation and learners' emotions (MacIntyre, 2002), as this shift to the affective side of motivation has only recently been suggested. Thus, this study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge on how foreign language learning motivation is shaped by emotional experiences.

In order to gain a better understanding of the emotional experiences originating during classroom instruction and their impact on foreign language learners' motivation, I carried out a qualitative study focusing on 18 students in an ELT programme in a Southeast Mexican university. Data was gathered through personal narratives, an Emotional Reactions Journal and semi-structured interviews. Analysis and interpretation of findings was done using a Grounded Theory approach in order to focus on the views of the participants themselves.

Findings reveal the pervasive influence of emotional reactions on foreign language learners' motivation. Emotions, whether negative or positive, impact not only negatively but also positively. Emotional reactions reported by participants mainly originated from teachers' interpersonal skills and the classroom environment. Although participants in this study reported more negative than positive affective experiences, the outcomes of these experiences were positive. The Mexican socio-economic context played a crucial role in helping students transform negative experiences into learning and motivational strategies which proved to be beneficial, not only for their learning processes, but also for their personal development.

The study highlights the crucial role language learners' emotional experiences have on their motivational behaviour and the significant influence teachers have on this. Recommendations for language teachers are offered so they can help foreign language learners minimise the negative impact of emotional experiences on their learning process, and promote positive emotions conducive to learning and energising learners' motivation.

## **Acknowledgements**

This thesis would have never been completed without the constant support and encouragement from my supervisors, Dr. Barbara Sinclair and Dr. Max Biddulph. Their patience and stimulating suggestions gave me the motivational energy to develop this work from start to finish.

Dr. Terry Lamb and Dr. Belinda Harris who were my examiners and whose recommendations shaped my thesis into this final version. I appreciate your kindness and thoroughness during the viva voce exam.

Above all, this research would not have been possible without the commitment of the participants of this study: Angela, Angie, Akira, Aserina, Isabel, Dayana, Enrique, Esperanza, Hanna, Jaded, Jane, Jimmy, Kenya, Luna, David, Natalia, Ricardo, and Angelica, who dedicated valuable time to participate in this study (pseudonyms have been used throughout).

To my mother and father for their unconditional love and support throughout my academic and personal life which has provided me with the strength to finish this journey. To the online company of my friends in Mexico who made my homesickness lighter. For my friends in Nottingham Zac, Paola, Maisa, Roxana, and Lee Roy thank you for all your support and help during these years.

*This thesis is dedicated to my daughters,  
**Giovanna** and **María José**, who embraced bravely  
the adventure of living in the UK in spite of  
missing their Caribbean sea.*



## **List of abbreviations**

<b>SEP</b>	State Ministry of Education
<b>EFL</b>	English as a Foreign Language
<b>ESL</b>	English as a Second Language
<b>PET</b>	Preliminary English Test
<b>ELT</b>	English Language Teaching
<b>ELL</b>	English Language Learning
<b>DOTE</b>	Diploma for Overseas Teachers of English
<b>SLA</b>	Second Language Acquisition
<b>ID</b>	Individual Differences
<b>GLL</b>	Good Language Learner
<b>USA</b>	United States of America

## **List of tables**

Table 1.0:	Mexican education system levels
Table 3.0:	General characteristics of GLLs
Table 3.1:	Individual differences taxonomies
Table 3.2:	Humanistic methods features
Table 3.3:	Motivational influences of the L2 process-oriented model
Table 4.0:	Interview schedule
Table 5.0:	Stages of analysis
Table 5.1:	Analytic categories
Table 6.0:	Emotions experienced by students during the term

## **List of figures**

Figure 3.0:	Maslow's needs hierarchy
Figure 5.0:	Sample of Nvivo output of free nodes
Figure 5.1:	Sample of Nvivo output model of positive effects of negative emotions
Figure 5.2:	Turning negative emotions into motivational energy cycle

## **Table of contents**

Abstract

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

List of tables and figures

### **Chapter 1: Introduction to the research context**

1.0	Origin of this research project	1
1.1	Research questions	3
1.2	Education in Mexico	4
1.3	English language teaching in Mexico	6
1.4	The Mayche University	9
1.5	ELT major students at the Mayche University	11
1.6	Motivation research approaches in foreign language learning	13
1.7	Why is an affective focus on language learning motivation research necessary?	14
1.8	Lack of research on emotions in language learning motivation	20
1.9	The research study	21
1.10	Structure of the thesis	24
1.11	Summary	25

### **Chapter 2: Clarifying research positioning: Understanding my language learning emotional experiences through autoethnography**

2.0	Introduction	27
2.1	Autoethnography as a research method	28
2.2	Advantages and limitations of autoethnography	31
2.3	Ethical considerations	33
2.4	Criticisms of the method	35
2.5	Evaluation of autoethnography	36
2.6	Foreign language learning narrative ethical procedures	39
2.7	My foreign language learning emotional experiences	41
2.7.1	Feelings of frustration I	42
2.7.2	Feelings of frustration II	44
2.8	Reflections about my two emotional experiences	46
2.9	Understandings and appreciations of my reflections	55
2.10	Summary	59

### **Chapter 3: Literature review**

3.0	Introduction	60
3.1	Individual differences in second language acquisition	60
3.1.1	The good language learner studies	61
3.1.2	Definition and taxonomies of Individual Differences	63
3.1.3	Individual Differences research in language learning	67
3.2	The impact of humanism in education	68
3.2.1	Humanistic psychology development	69
3.2.2	The development of humanistic education	71
3.3	Humanistic language teaching	73
3.3.1	Criticisms of humanistic language teaching	77
3.3.2	Countering criticisms of humanistic education with tough love, eustress and dynamic disequilibrium	82
3.4	Motivational psychology theories	86
3.4.1	Self-efficacy theory	87
3.4.2	Attribution theory	89
3.4.3	Self-worth theory	91
3.4.4	Self-determination theory	93
3.5	Motivation theories in foreign language learning	94
3.5.1	The process-oriented model of L2 motivation	98
3.5.2	Motivational strategies proposal	103
3.5.3	The L2 motivational self system	105
3.6	Emotions in foreign language learning and their connection to motivation	107
3.6.1	Emotional experiences in foreign language learning	110
3.6.2	Factors influencing emotional experiences in language learning	112
3.7	Summary	122

### **Chapter 4: Research Design**

4.0	Introduction	123
4.1	Choosing a methodology	123
4.2	Myself as researcher	131
4.3	Participants in the study	134
4.4	Obtaining access to and from participants	136
4.5	Data generation and data collection methods	137
4.5.1	Previous English language studies questionnaire	138
4.5.2	Personal narratives	139
4.5.3	Semi-structured interviews	141
4.5.4	Students' Emotional Experiences Journal	144
4.6	Ethics in qualitative research	147
4.7	Data collection process	150

4.7.1	Personal narratives	151
4.7.2	Students' Emotional Experiences Journal	153
4.7.3	Semi-structured interviews	155
4.8	Methods of data analysis	156
4.9	Issues of trustworthiness	159
4.10	Summary	162

## **Chapter 5: The Account: Emotional reactions experienced by Mexican English language learners in a university classroom**

5.0	Introduction	163
5.1	Data analysis	163
5.1.1	Data analysis and interpretation using Grounded Theory	164
5.1.2	Open and axial coding	165
5.1.3	Memoing	168
5.1.4	Building theory through integration of categories	169
5.2	Emotional experiences of language learners and their impact on Motivation	172
5.2.1	Main research question	173
5.2.1.1	Fear as a paralysing force	173
5.2.1.2	Fear as a motivating force	176
5.2.2	First research sub-question	181
5.2.2.1	An ineffective language learning environment engendered through fear	182
5.2.3	Second research sub-question	191
5.2.3.1	Turning negative emotions into motivational energy	191
5.2.4	Third research sub-question	201
5.2.4.1	Emotional experiences' effects on language learners' motivation	202
5.3	Summary	211

## **Chapter 6: Discussion: An analysis of language learners' motivation**

6.0	Introduction	212
6.1	Emotional experiences of Mexican language learners	213
6.1.1	Analytic category one: The influence of the teacher on Mexican students' emotional experiences and motivation	215
6.1.2	Analytic category two: The impact of peers on Mexican students' emotional experiences and motivation	228

6.1.3	Analytic category three: The bidirectional impact of emotional experiences on Mexican students' motivation	232
6.1.4	Analytic category four: The influence of the social context on Mexican students' emotional experiences and motivation	245
6.2	Summary	252

## **Chapter 7: Implications for foreign language teaching practice**

7.0	Introduction	253
7.1	Emotions in foreign language learning motivation	253
7.1.1	Conclusion 1: Teacher's interpersonal skills have a great impact on students' motivation levels and their maintenance	256
7.1.2	Conclusion 2: A lack of cohesion and collaboration between students can have negative effects on students' motivation	257
7.1.3	Conclusion 3: Mexican students have the remarkable capacity to turn negative emotions and events into positive learning strategies, thus enhancing their motivation to succeed	260
7.1.4	Conclusion 4: Their cultural and social background forces Mexican students to find in negative events a positive side so they can keep their motivation levels high	261
7.1.5	Conclusion 5: The value given to university education in Mexican society is so high that students are motivated to succeed in subject areas that are not their first choice	263
7.1.6	A critical personal reflection on the research process	266
7.2	Implications for foreign language teachers	276
7.2.1	Developing a motivating language learning environment	277
7.2.2	The teacher's affective-motivational power in ELT	281
7.2.3	Motivating ELT practices	286
7.3	Summary	289

## **Chapter 8: Conclusion**

8.0	Introduction	290
8.1	Summary of the research	290
8.2	Contributions to knowledge	292
8.3	Limitations of this research	295
8.4	Recommendations for future research	297
8.5	A personal reflection	298
8.6	Summary	302

**Bibliography**

**Appendix A** Previous English language studies questionnaire

**Appendix B** A participant's personal narrative

**Appendix C** Semi-structured interview guide

**Appendix D** Participant consent form

**Appendix E** Research information form

**Appendix F** Data generation plan

**Appendix G** Analytic categories derived from journals and interviews

**Appendix H** Storyline

**Appendix I** Participants' portraits

# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

When we educators fail to appreciate the importance of students' emotions, we fail to appreciate a critical force in students' learning. (Immordino-Yang and Damasio, 2007, p. 9)

### **1.0 Origin of this research project**

My interest in undertaking this research is focused on improving my practice as a language teacher and helping students break those barriers imposed by the complex process of learning a foreign language. My research experience is in the area of learning strategies, since I consider that this topic has practical implications for teachers, and that those who benefit the most are learners, who can be empowered by a set of strategies to use whenever they need them.

My intention when registering for my PhD was to carry out a study on foreign language learning affective strategies and their impact on foreign language learning success. This interest was based on a piece of research I had undertaken in 2000 at a Southeast Mexican university. In this previous study, affective strategies were found to be amongst those least used by students. This was surprising for me since the study was carried out in Mexico, which is a warm and collectivist society (Hofstede, 2010). Mexicans in general are warm and expressive people who make use of social and affective skills in all areas of their lives. Why, then, were Mexican students not making use of



affective strategies? At that time, my assumption was that Mexicans would be using these strategies.

After exploring the literature on humanism in general education and affect in language learning in particular, I found that literature was reporting the need to start researching foreign language learning motivation from an affective perspective. The new direction scholars were proposing regarding motivation research matched with my interest in affective strategies by combining these with motivation, which is considered to be the variable that can make a student succeed or not succeed in their language learning process. Due to this interest, my research has focused on the role played by the emotional experiences foreign language learners undergo during classroom instruction, and how these impact on their motivation and, consequently, on their learning process.

My research training modules made me aware of the importance of choosing the best research design to answer specific research questions. The first sessions of my research training modules were very educational for me as a future researcher as they made me reflect on my needs as a student, teacher and researcher. Thus, after a review of different methods used in educational research and recent studies in the area of emotions in education, I decided to conduct a qualitative study since it would be the most suitable approach to follow in order to give answers to my research questions. I will explain in more detail the rationale behind deciding to conduct a qualitative study in Section 4.3 of Chapter Four.

## **1.1 Research questions**

This study aims at understanding the role of the emotional reactions of ELT major students in order to gain a deep understanding of the fluctuation in learners' motivation and how emotions affect it positively and negatively. Thus, the following research question and sub-questions were formulated:

### **1. How do EFL learners' affective experiences in the classroom in a Mexican university impact on their motivation to learn?**

#### **1a. How does affective experience manifest itself?**

#### **1b. What factors influence the nature of such experiences?**

#### **1c. How is motivation connected to affective experience?**

In order to understand why ELT programme students decided to register in the degree, what experiences engendered their motivation to study and how these experiences created expectations in students about what the ELT programme could offer to them, students were asked to write a personal narrative in which they expressed their initial motivation origins. I consider that knowing how their interest in registering in the ELT programme originated is paramount to understanding current students' perceptions about their motivation and affective states. Besides narratives, participants wrote an Emotional Reactions Journal for a period of 12 weeks, and at the end of the term a semi-structured interview was conducted. My approach to the research will be further detailed in Chapter Four.

In the following section, the education system in Mexico is described in order to understand how English language teaching and learning fits within it. A

description of Mexico's educational system serves here to understand the context for this investigation.

**1.2 Education in Mexico**

The education system in Mexico is under the control of the State Ministry of Education (SEP), which has a branch in every state of the country. The SEP is in charge of ensuring that the national curriculum is delivered in all elementary, primary, secondary and preparatory schools in Mexico, and it does this by designing syllabuses and producing the textbooks in use at every level.

**Table 1.0: Mexican education system levels**

Elementary school	3 to 5 years old Levels 1 to 3
Primary school	6 to 11 years old Levels 1 to 6
Secondary school	12 to 14 years old Levels 1 to 3
Preparatory school	15 to 17 years old Levels 1 to 3

Source: [http://www.mexterior.sep.gob.mx:7008/1\\_emeu.htm](http://www.mexterior.sep.gob.mx:7008/1_emeu.htm)

It is compulsory for Mexican children to attend elementary, primary and secondary school throughout Mexico; thus, the SEP has created state and rural schools so all children can have access to basic education. Most children go to state schools where groups are extremely large. Consequently, the natural curiosity of children is repressed because of the need to keep them under control, and the attention given to individual children is minimal.

In my experience, teaching in Mexican secondary schools typically involves explaining and asking students to memorise the information given. Consequently, children become used to this practice with the result that their natural need to experiment and discover things is lost.

When Mexican students arrive at university, having passed through all levels of the education system, they find that even at this higher educational level, teachers of different subjects still ask only for rote memorisation. However, it is increasingly the case that some teachers also expect other abilities from students, such as the ability to interact with their peers in conversations, role plays and other types of activities. Such a change in educational culture is not easy for all students to accept, and a large number of them seem to be unable to cope with the new demands.

I believe that individual differences, such as attitudes, beliefs and motivation levels, among others, predispose particular orientations within students and thus determine the way students cope with the new demands at university level. Furthermore, previous experiences at school can determine students' beliefs and assumptions about language learning, therefore making the transition to tertiary level study difficult for them.

Aside from Mexico's state schools, there are also private schools at all levels, and it is the case that those students who attend private schools are exposed to different learning approaches because the private sector offers a variety of approaches to learning. My daughters have been able to experience this, as they have attended private schools since the elementary level. In this environment, students tend to learn in a more supportive set of circumstances with very close attention being paid to each student in a class. Additionally,

classes in private schools have the advantage of not being limited to the basic subjects, as they also offer courses such as arts, dance, English, computer science, and drama.

The fact that students in the private education sector are exposed to subjects other than those included in the official national curriculum gives them the opportunity to experience other kinds of activities, which creates an awareness of different ways to achieve goals and objectives. The resources, approaches and variety of activities in private schools are vast, and they help students to develop in a rounded way, whereas in state schools the large number of students, together with the lack of resources, hinder such development for children. As a result, students who progress to university from private schools seem in my experience to be better prepared to face the educational and social demands at university level.

### **1.3 English language teaching in Mexico**

The study of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has been compulsory at secondary and high school levels in Mexico for the past four decades. In 1993, the focus of English as a Foreign Language classes changed from a reading comprehension approach to a communicative one (SEP, 1993). This change has faced a number of constraints because of the lack of communicative competence of most teachers at the time. Although the SEP has introduced training and support for teachers in order to comply with the new regulations, changes have been slow in day-to-day practice.

Although in some Mexican states children at primary state schools are taking EFL classes, this is not yet an official regulation since the programme will be initiated gradually, and it is expected to be totally integrated into elementary

and primary schools over the next ten years (Valle, 2008). Mexican students start their compulsory study of English in secondary school, where the English language is taught in three 50 minutes sessions per week for three years (Manteca, 2006). Later, at the age of 15, students move to technical high schools or preparatory schools and continue studying English. When they proceed to state universities they have to pass a recognised English examination in order to graduate.

According to my experience, the first encounter that Mexican students generally have with English is in secondary school, where it is usually taught in the following way: students are given large lists of vocabulary to learn by heart, they memorise dialogues, write examples of verb tenses in a mechanical way, answer questions from a reading extract or translate sentences or texts. Listening and speaking activities are not utilised in secondary schools; the focus is mostly on reading, and writing consists merely of copying questions and answering them. As stated by Manteca (2006):

An example of this can be seen in teachers' most 'common practices': reading aloud, translating, making lists of vocabulary, repeating in chorus, amongst others, all of which are very distant from what is suggested in the PPE 1993 (p. 7).

Students in secondary schools have English classes three days a week. Although these represent about 300 hours at the end of the third year, when students proceed to preparatory schools, they have to start again with the basics of the language, using the same approach as in secondary schools. Another factor is teachers' qualifications, since practising teachers at these levels are not certified as language teachers (Valle, 2008). Thus, students are false beginners in secondary and in preparatory school. By the time students

arrive at university, most of them seem to lack motivation because of their previous experiences. There are also private institutes and schools where English is taught, but some students who attend state universities cannot afford the expense of such extra tuition since their families are already making an effort to pay for their university education, and others may not consider it an educational priority. State universities have language centres where English and other foreign languages are taught and where a different approach to the teaching of English is evident because teachers in these centres have been more exposed to training courses or possess a B.A. in English language teaching.

It is important to point out that Mexican students' first experience of English is not a communicative one since they are expected only to memorise, repeat dialogues, translate sentences or extracts and answer comprehension questions. When students reach university they expect the same patterns of language learning, and some find that a communicative approach is too much of a shock for them. Teachers at university level must therefore work hard in order to help students adapt to a different approach and guide them, not only because of the different approach to English teaching, but also because students are very dependent on teachers due to their previous experiences in the educational system.

Regardless of their major, all university students in Mexico are required to pass an English examination in order to graduate. The examination varies according to the state, university and major students are pursuing, but the lowest level required in order to obtain a degree is the Preliminary English Test (PET) level. All Mexican state universities have a language centre in which students can attend different language classes in order to prepare to

pass the required test at the end of their degree years. Students usually have to attend English classes for an hour daily. Currently, teachers at university language centres are qualified and certified teachers who are likely to attend conferences or take training courses on diverse topics.

University language centres usually work with a prescribed syllabus and course book which comprises six different levels: lower and upper elementary, lower and upper intermediate, and lower and upper advanced. Students' assessment is purely based on written exams, which allow them to pass to the next language level until they finish the six levels. However, according to my experience, students usually leave their language courses until the very end of their studies as they prefer to concentrate on their major courses first. Thus, gradual learning of the English language is not achieved, and consequently many students fail the test and obstruct their graduation.

The following section will briefly describe the setting in which this study was carried out and the student population features according to my experience as a teacher in this university. The real names of the setting, context and people involved in this study had been changed throughout this thesis in order to protect their identities.

#### **1.4 The Mayche University**

The Mayche University was created in 1991 by the state's government. It was founded as a state institution that would fulfil the local population's need to have a higher education centre to qualify young people in different areas. The overall aim of this state university is to achieve academic excellence through radical changes in the educational focus, organisation, university authorities, financing and infrastructure (Periodico Oficial, 1991).



The Mayche University initiated its academic activities in September 1991. The educational principles established in its creation statutes are four: community links, multidiscipline, innovation and quality. Besides these four principles, since its creation the Mayche University has emphasised the need to work towards an integral education of students, and aims to banish the prevalent informative focus that promotes rote learning. This new focus attempts to educate students not only through lectures, but also by making use of different resources and means in the teaching-learning process. Thus individualised guidance and self-directed learning is the goal (Periodico Oficial, 1991).

The Mayche University offers a degree in English language teaching (ELT), and students from different nearby rural towns and cities come to Mayche city to study for the degree. Although the focus of the degree programme is on the preparation of English teachers, students with the desire to work as translators, or in the tourism sector, are also attracted to the degree. The development of the English language is considered to be important in the state because the Mayche region has emerged as an important tourism zone, with visitors coming from different countries to visit its white sand beaches, jungles, archaeological sites and Mayan towns. English is an important means of communication and people who have the ability to speak a foreign language find employment in hotels, restaurants, resorts and bars.

In order to consolidate the new model of learning in the Mayche University, it is important that students know what is expected of them. It is also necessary for students to know their capabilities and the facilities available to them at the Mayche University in order to achieve their personal objectives. Since its creation, the Mayche University has emphasised the need to have more

autonomous learners in Mexico (Periodico Oficial, 1991), but the process is challenging and involves a great deal of time and effort, not only from students, but also from teachers. Changes have to be made in terms of the respective roles which teachers and students have adopted in previous years. Although the university may be a new one, the actual teachers are not and they have been used to particular pedagogical techniques. In my opinion, teachers need to be trained in order to better understand their role in this new project, and to be able to guide their students in the process of achieving the goal of self-directed learning.

### **1.5 ELT major students at the Mayche University**

Students of the ELT major are students from the Mayche region. They are young, and are attracted to the degree for different reasons: for example, through my experience as a teacher in this institution, I have become aware that the students are interested in interacting with people from other cultures; some want to work in the tourist zone in the Mayche Riviera, and some want to teach English in primary, secondary or preparatory schools. These students bring to university their traditional educational experiences from their previous schooling. They also come from different educational backgrounds, both from rural and state schools. As a result, the process of adaptation from the old to the new environment, approach and resources is often difficult and very frustrating.

Some students are enthusiastic and eager to learn, but because of their various rationales for studying, students' motivation varies. Some students pursue the degree in English because they were not able to gain a place on the degree they wanted, e.g. law, economics, etc., not because they really want to be English language teachers. As a result, classrooms are filled with

students from different educational backgrounds and mostly with different ideas about what they want from their programme of study. Individual differences between students play a very important role in language learning (Dörnyei and Skehan, 2003). These include age, aptitude, attitude, personality, learning styles, learning strategies and motivation. In my experience, however, it is motivation which seems to stand out as the most important factor affecting success in students' studies.

I have noticed that there is a clear tendency for the students' initial motivation to diminish as the programme progresses. This causes some of them to fail some subjects and others to become a year behind, because the university regulations do not allow a student to take a course and fail it more than three times. Thus, teachers have to deal with a classroom where some students are lacking the motivational energy to make them work hard and complete activities with enthusiasm, which in turn makes teachers feel demotivated as well.

There are a number of possible causes of this loss of motivation. For example, external factors that contribute to this phenomenon might include the organisation of the curriculum, the students' previous experiences with the English language, their cultural backgrounds, their social environment adjustment (since some are living alone for the first time), and general problems in acculturating to the demands of their new environment and course. Nevertheless, this lack of motivation in students who are supposed to become the future EFL teachers in the state is worrying, and is thus the problem I focus on in this research project.

## **1.6 Motivation research approaches in foreign language learning**

Until recently, motivation research in foreign language learning has largely focused on studying it as if motivation were a stable, non-dynamic construct which is not developed through interaction with teachers, peers, subject content and context (Dörnyei, 2000; Larsen-Freeman, 2001; Ellis, 2004; Shoaib and Dörnyei, 2004). Some studies have concentrated on establishing correlations between motivation and language proficiency (Ellis and Larsen-Freeman, 2006), while other studies have focused on identifying and analysing diverse motives and validating motivational theories, instead of concentrating on the development of motivational strategies that can help students to cope with the process of learning a foreign language (Cheng and Dörnyei, 2007). Thus, motivation has largely been researched with a quantitative approach which has provided diverse results in the field of English language teaching. As acknowledged by Williams et al. (2002):

Over the last two decades, the AMTB (Attitude Motivation Test Battery) has formed the basis of a considerable number of studies of a quantitative nature which focus on the strength of different factors that affect language learning motivation (p. 505).

Although these lines of research are valuable and informative, their results do not provide an understanding of the process of motivation during the undertaking of learning a foreign language. In general motivation studies the same picture can be found (Entwistle and Entwistle, 1991; Newstweed, 1992; Fazey and Fazey, 1998). Thus, the need to approach future motivational studies from a different perspective is a current concern for motivational researchers (Dörnyei, 2001a; Ellis, 2004; Williams et al., 2004; Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008).

Motivation has been considered the single factor determining success or failure in second and foreign language learning (Dörnyei, 2001a). As stated by Dörnyei (2003) more recently, motivation is a construct that alters over time:

Learners tend to demonstrate a fluctuating level of commitment even within a single lesson, and the variation in their motivation over a longer period (e.g., a whole academic term) can be dramatic (p. 17).

Due to its temporal dimension, I consider motivation an unstable learner factor and the most challenging one for any language teacher, since it is desirable to sustain the initial motivation students bring to the first sessions of any course. According to Dörnyei (2000):

During the lengthy process of mastering certain subject matters, motivation does not remain constant but is associated with a dynamically changing and evolving mental process characterised by constant (re) appraisal and balancing of the various internal and external influences that the individual is exposed to (p. 523).

## **1.7 Why is an affective focus on foreign language learning motivation necessary?**

From the first motivational studies, affective aspects have been considered to be as important as language aptitude in language learning success (Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1985). However, affective research in foreign language learning has concentrated on constructs such as anxiety, self-esteem, and learners' beliefs. Although this research has advanced our knowledge of these factors, emotions have not yet been given enough attention in foreign language learning research (Imai, 2010). Thus, my study aims at adding to our knowledge of the role of emotions in foreign language learning motivation.

The construct of affect ‘...is essentially diffuse and difficult to define’ (Do and Schallert, 2004, p.619). Affect is an umbrella term that has been used in foreign language learning research for a range of affective factors such as anxiety, self-esteem, and learners’ beliefs. However, integral components of affect are emotions, feelings and moods. The first two terms are considered close in meaning and are used interchangeably in education literature (Efklides and Volet, 2005; Scherer, 2005). Ekman (2003) acknowledges that emotions and moods involve feelings, meaning that feelings are a component of both and this may be the reason that a definite separation of them has not been possible in the literature. Along the same lines, Prinz (2005) states that emotions are feelings and both terms refer to perceptions of bodily changes: when these perceptions are conscious they are *feelings*, whereas when they are not conscious they are *emotions*. However, the role of bodily feelings in the experience of an emotion remains an open question, since there are no conclusions from the research that has been done in this area (Barret et al., 2007). The close interrelationship between emotions and feelings makes it very difficult to separate the two concepts. However, moods seem to be more likely to be distinguished from emotions since the latter can be traced as reactions to particular events, whereas mood changes sometimes may not be attributable to a specific reason (Ekman, 2003). Thus, for the purpose of this thesis the terms affective experiences and emotional experiences will be used interchangeably to refer to feelings or emotions experienced during foreign language learning instruction.

As a language teacher, I am interested in understanding how motivation fluctuation is shaped by emotions. Although originally motivation was considered more a cognitive variable than an affective one, the impact of emotions in motivation is starting to gain ground in the ELT field. As

highlighted by MacIntyre (2002), 'The motivational properties of emotion have been severely underestimated in the language learning literature' (p. 45). Along the same lines, Dewaele (2005) calls for more research focus on affect and emotions in particular, in order to pay increased attention to the communication of emotion and the development of sociocultural competence in an L2. Schumann's (1998) neurobiology theory considers feelings and emotions as crucial to the understanding of second language achievement. According to him, learning a second or foreign language is manipulated by our emotions, and these shape behaviour and perhaps all cognition.

In some expressed motives a learner of a foreign language may have, including maintaining his or her self-esteem, getting a good grade, getting a good job, proving he or she possesses the abilities to perform a task, avoiding failure, or pleasing his or her parents or teacher, an emotional component is behind the motive that makes students initiate or continue with the complex task of learning a foreign language. As Horwitz (1995) states, 'The fact that successful language learning depends on the emotional responses of the learners...has profound implications for foreign language teaching' (p. 576).

The role learners' emotions play in their motivation appears to be a line to follow in future language learning motivation studies, as MacIntyre (2002) suggests '...emotion just might be the fundamental basis of motivation, one deserving far greater attention in the language learning domain' (p. 45). Along the same lines, So (2004) states that '...questions about how emotions can or should be managed in order to optimize one's learning are a worthwhile domain for serious investigation...' (p. 54). A recent proposal in learning motivational studies is Dörnyei's (2005) theory of the L2 Motivational self-system of which the two main constructs, the Ideal L2 self and Ought to self,

imply the influence of emotions on foreign language learning motivation, since an Ideal L2 self is an affective pressure on learners' learning processes and can produce negative effects on students who may see that their Ideal L2 self is very far from their real one. This theory will be further discussed in Chapter Three.

The need to deepen our understanding of emotions in motivation in foreign language learning is what motivated this research project since, as Dewaele (2005) states:

...a focus on affect and emotion among researchers might inspire authors of teaching materials and foreign language teachers to pay increased attention to the communication of emotion and the development of sociocultural competence in a L2 (p. 367).

According to Horwitz (1995) placing emphasis on the affective domain in the ELT field is a great opportunity to improve our teaching practices, since 'It is within the power of language teachers to address the emotional concerns of their students' (p. 578). Thus, affective states are considered central to the process of learning a language and closely related to the success or failure of such a task (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991; Young, 1991; Horwitz, 2001; MacIntyre, 2002). Indeed, some researchers now acknowledge affect as the core of motivation in learning (Dörnyei, 2001b; Meyer and Turner 2006). Emotions in learning and specifically in language learning is a topic that needs to be explored in order to understand better how these influences shape students' learning motivational energy. As MacIntyre (2002) states, 'Emotion has not been given sufficient attention in the language learning literature, with the exception of studies of language anxiety' (p. 45).



Emotions are considered to be universal to all cultures (Ekman, 2003). As universal, I believe, is the desire to experience only positive, enjoyable emotions and to avoid those negative emotions that make us suffer or feel uneasy. According to Ekman (2003), emotions are:

...a process, a particular kind of automatic appraisal influenced by our revolutionary and personal past, in which we sense that something important to our welfare is occurring, and a set of physiological changes and emotional behaviors begin to deal with the situation (p. 13).

In educational settings emotions are important since they can provide us with knowledge to comprehend students' reactions to instruction, and may provide us with insights on how to make it a more effective process. According to the motivation study results of Meyer and Turner (2002), '...classrooms norms and roles, instructional activities and tasks, and the social structures of the classrooms were reflected in student feelings, beliefs and actions' (p. 110) .

The determinant role of emotions in learning has been acknowledged in general education literature. According to Immordino-Yang and Damasio (2007), 'Any competent teacher recognizes that emotions and feelings affect students' performance and learning' (p. 3). The core role affect plays on motivation has been highlighted by Meyer and Turner (2006) in their account of their classroom motivation studies: 'It became clear that affect, both positive and negative, was central to understanding motivation and motivational climates' (p. 380). Although Meyer and Turner were initially interested in motivational theories in instructed learning, emotions emerged in their studies as the most pervasive influence, not only on motivation, but on effective teaching.

Although the strong influence affective aspects have on learning outcomes in all areas is becoming evident through research, it seems that in higher education settings, formal acknowledgement of emotions or feelings is not as frequent as at other levels, perhaps because adults are more careful about losing face in front of peers. According to Owen-Smith (2004), the idea of teachers showing an interest in emotional-affective aspects in education has been neglected,

...as teachers we have been well socialized to value the cognitive but more times than not, we have also learned to ignore or marginalize the affective, the emotional, in teaching and learning (p. 1).

Immordino-Yang and Damasio (2007) state that educators frequently fail to consider that cognitive skills are influenced by emotion. Although the humanistic movement led to a recognition of the importance of feelings in education, and changes were therefore made in school curricula, I consider that in higher education formal acknowledgement of emotions is not common. More affective-emotional research is needed in this context since, as Meyer and Turner (2006) express:

Understanding how positive classroom environments develop and are sustained is essential for improving educational opportunities through the quality of instructional interactions, which have relationships and emotions at their core (p. 390).

Although motivation is considered the most important determinant of language learning success, its close link to emotions has not been given as much attention in language learning research as other affective aspects; most studies related to affect in language learning have focused on anxiety, attitudes and, more recently, on learners' beliefs. According to Immordino-Yang and Damasio (2007), '...learning, attention, memory, decision making,

***motivation*** [emphasis added] and social functioning, are profoundly affected by emotion...' (p. 7). Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore a sample of ELT major students' experiences in order to gain a deep understanding of the role emotions play in foreign language learning motivation.

### **1.8 Lack of research on emotions in language learning motivation**

Although affect in language learning has been acknowledged since the introduction of the humanistic methods: The Silent Way, Community Language Learning and Suggestopedia, and through the introduction of affective-humanistic activities in language classrooms, it seems that emotions are not formally acknowledged in daily practice by language teachers. One reason may be the strong criticisms humanistic methods received in the early 1980s. While some authors favoured the use of affective strategies or humanistic activities in language classes (Arnold, 1998; Arnold and Brown, 1999), others state that ELT teachers should be more concerned with the language they are supposed to help students learn (Gadd, 1998). Affect in language learning has been criticised hotly; however, we cannot ignore the fact that students' emotions, feelings and attitudes shape the process of learning a foreign language and help to determine the degree of success students may experience in this process.

Beard et al. (2007) consider that affective aspects '...are under-researched and under-theorised in higher education' (p. 235). They propose:

...a way of thinking about pedagogical spaces in higher education where the physical, psycho-social space and climate allow the development of language and activities, and the exploration, expression and acceptance of emotions and feelings of self and others in ways that contribute to learning (p. 240).

Although there have been a number of studies of the impact of emotions in general education (Pekrun et al., 2002; Do and Schallert, 2004; Efklides and Volet, 2005; Järvenova and Järvelä, 2005), emotions and their impact on motivation seems to be an area that needs exploring in foreign language learning (Dewaele, 2005). There is a growing consensus regarding the need to start looking at motivation from an affective perspective; thus, more research needs to be done in the foreign language learning field (MacIntyre, 2002; Dewaele, 2005; Immordino-Yang and Damasio, 2007).

The two areas of inquiry into emotions in education that have advanced in recent decades are those of test anxiety and the attributional antecedents of achievement emotions (Pekrun, 2000; Schutz and Lanehart, 2002). With these two exceptions, it seems that we lack knowledge and understanding of emotions in education. Although test anxiety has been proven to be the most pervasive emotion in educational settings, it is necessary to understand the role of other emotions in order to gain a broad view of their impact on learning. Pekrun (2000) supports this by stating that, '...more than 80 percent of our students' emotional life is made up of other emotions, including not only negative emotions, but a number of positive emotions as well' (p. 146).

## **1.9 The research study**

This study seeks a deep understanding of students' everyday language learning emotions and their influence on their motivation. In particular, this study examines how students react to emotional events in classrooms and how these reactions affect their motivational behaviour in daily classes.

As with motivation research, emotions have also been studied following a quantitative approach, in which emotions are reported using Likert-scales.

One limitation of this type of study is the difficulty of ensuring that the emotion evoked is as strong as the emotion actually experienced during a previous event. Personally, I do not believe that an evocation of an emotion can reflect the feelings experienced when first going through an emotional experience. Another drawback of quantitative approaches in emotion studies is that there is no information of the cause of an specific emotion or what that emotion may have meant to students (Hascher, 2007). Reflection upon this contributed to my decision to make my study a qualitative one, because of my interest in understanding students' emotional experiences and their impact on motivation in the process of learning a foreign language. As stated by Dewaele (2005), a foreign language learner is '...not only an object of scientific curiosity, but also a crucial witness of his or her own learning process' (p. 369).

Quantitative methods did not seem appropriate to the purpose of this study as they could restrict or obscure the richness of data students could contribute to the study findings due to the use of restrictive and standardising coding (Cohen et al., 2000). I do believe that qualitative approaches are better suited to gaining a fuller understanding of people's lives, experiences, beliefs and realities, since, as stated by (Cohen et al., 2007), quantitative methods:

...fail to take into account our unique ability to interpret our experiences and represent them to ourselves. We can and do construct theories about ourselves and our world; moreover, we act on these theories (p. 18).

Due to the nature of emotions in language learning, a qualitative design would best explore the dynamic and temporal dimensions of motivation. Since quantitative research is limited in capturing subjective experiences of participants of any phenomenon, I considered that a qualitative approach could best help me to give an interpretation of the impact of emotional

experiences on foreign language learners' motivation. Qualitative methods allow us to gain a deep understanding of the motives behind human behaviour. Although presenting the 'real' truth is something that I consider we cannot fully accomplish, because we are all actors in the society in which we live and interact, I do believe that qualitative methods can help us to better understand a phenomenon in a given community or setting.

A qualitative method of inquiry which I consider suitable for this study's purpose is narrative writing, because it focuses on researching '...into a experience...' (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 50). According to Clandinin and Connelly, narrative writing allows researchers to question internal conditions such as feelings and emotions, external conditions such as the environment and the temporal dimensions of past, present and future. Along the same lines, Ellis and Bochner (2000) state that through narrative inquiry '...you come to understand yourself in deeper ways. And with understanding yourself comes understanding others' (p. 738). Thus, narrative inquiry was used to explore my emotional experiences in my language learning history as well as to find out about participants' motivation to register for the ELT programme at Mayche University. My personal experience portrays the culture where this study was carried out and helps in the understanding of the interpretation derived from participants' emotional experiences.

Reality is subjective: what may be the truth for you may not be for others. As human beings we are shaped by the values, beliefs, customs and rules of the environment in which we were born and in which we live. Thus, when investigating people in any field we are going to be interacting with all of those personal features. I do not believe that the significance of people's

experiences and realities can be quantified numerically. Numbers and percentages may be exact, but we human beings have the tendency not to be. As an educational researcher I see myself understanding people, events and situations in order to improve my personal and professional performance, and my hope when engaging in research is that this personal and professional development enables me to help others as well.

#### **1.10 Structure of the thesis**

This chapter has outlined why this study is important, where it fits into the broader literature and what the main research questions are, reflecting the main themes of the research. Furthermore, it has introduced the research approach employed and briefly justified its choice. Finally, an overall view of this thesis has been presented.

Chapter 2 reviews autoethnography as a research method and points out the main aspects that making an autoethnography entails, as well as the importance of following ethical guidelines to protect the author and his or her loved ones. My personal experience as a foreign language learner and teacher is presented in order to exemplify the method.

Chapter 3 reviews the literature on the three areas of investigation related to this study: humanistic education, motivation theories in the ELT field and emotions in education and FLL.

Chapter 4 is the methodology chapter, which discusses the qualitative approach I have taken. The chapter also introduces the participants and how data collection was carried out through personal narratives, an electronic journal and interviews.

Chapter 5 describes the process of analysis taken following a Grounded Theory approach and presents the findings of the study using the main research question and sub-questions to show how the results fit into these.

Chapter 6 is a discussion of the findings revealed by Mexican students' emotional experiences in the Mayche University. Four analytic categories are used as a basis for the discussion of the research findings.

Chapter 7 presents the main conclusions drawn out from the study findings and interpretation. The implications for foreign language teachers' practice are also discussed.

Chapter 8 presents a summary of the research findings, the value of the study and suggestions for further research. Following this, the limitations of the study are outlined. Finally, my experience of the research process is expressed through a personal reflection.

## **1.11 Summary**

This chapter has introduced my professional and personal motivation for carrying out this research. The study's research questions were introduced. A brief review of studies focused on motivation and emotions in education was presented in order to justify my research approach. Finally, a summary of the thesis chapters is presented.

The following chapter provides a rationale for the use of autoethnography as a research method through presenting my own personal narratives about two emotional events during my foreign language learning development. In order



to better understand the method, I applied it to my own experience as a foreign language learner. The process not only allowed me to experience it first hand, it also made me realise how important it is to take ethical concerns into account during the data generation process, and made me aware of how sensitive the topic might be for my future research participants.

## **Chapter 2**

# **Clarifying research positioning: Understanding my language learning emotional experiences through autoethnography**

Language and culture function together with the material individual, to form a social subject, whose self-hood is not unitary but is constantly being created and re-created in negotiation with the social world outside itself. (Granger, 2004, p. 34)

### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter reviews the literature on autoethnography as a research method. It will first describe what is meant by autoethnography, or evocative narratives, and consider the particular features of this type of method. The chapter will go on to explore the emotions involved in my foreign language learning experience, focusing on two emotional moments in my development. Understanding my own experience was a stage of the research process that later allowed me to interpret my participants' experiences and represent them through writing. The chapter closes with a reflection on the factors affecting my motivation when studying English as a foreign language in Mexico. Different themes emerged through my reflection as influential on my language learning process; however, culture turned out to be the pervasive reference for my emotional and motivational fluctuation.

## **2.1 Autoethnography as a research method**

The underlying assumption of qualitative research is that reality and truth are constructed and shaped through the interaction between people and the environment in which they live. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000b) '...qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them' (p. 3). Although a qualitative approach opposes the positivist standpoint that assumes that reality is objective and independent from the researcher, it has been accepted as a valuable practice of research. Qualitative research employs a variety of methods which imply a humanistic stance in which phenomena under investigation are examined through the eyes and experiences of individual participants. It is because of this particular approach to inquiry that personal narratives, experiences and opinions are valuable data which provide researchers with tools to find those tentative answers they are looking for.

Qualitative research has historically developed over time (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000b). In the traditional period (the early 1900s), researchers aimed at presenting an objective account of their field experiences. The modernist period (from the post-war years to the 1970s) was characterised by researchers' concerns about formalising qualitative research to be as rigorous as quantitative research. The period of blurred genres (1970-1986) was characterised by the diverse research strategies and formats used by qualitative researchers. During the 'crisis of representation' period (the mid-1980s), autoethnography emerged due to 'the calls to place greater emphasis on the ways in which the ethnographer interacts with the culture being researched' (Holt, 2003, p. 18). Thus, autoethnography allows researchers to

draw on their own experiences to understand a particular phenomenon or culture.

Autoethnography is a useful qualitative research method used to analyse people's lives, a tool that Ellis and Bochner (2000) define as '...an autobiographical genre of writing that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural' (p. 739). There are different uses of the term and it varies according to the relations between the researcher's personal experience and the phenomenon under investigation (Foster et al., 2006). Autoethnography can range from research about personal experiences of a research process to parallel exploration of the researcher's and the participants' experiences and about the experience of the researcher while conducting a specific piece of research (Ellis and Bochner, 2000).

McIlveen (2008) states that the core feature of autoethnography '...entails the scientist or practitioner performing narrative analysis pertaining to himself or herself as intimately related to a particular phenomenon' (p. 3). Thus, it is not just writing about oneself, it is about being critical about personal experiences in the development of the research being undertaken, or about experiences of the topic being investigated. Reed-Danahay (Reed-Danahay, 1997, pp. 3-4) assigns three main characteristics to autoethnography: (1) The role of the autoethnographer in the narrative: is the autoethnographer an insider or an outsider of the phenomenon being described? (2) Whose voice is being heard: who is speaking, the people under investigation or the researcher? (3) Cultural displacement: some realities are being described by people who have been displaced from their natural environment due to political or social issues. Although autoethnography can be approached with different focuses, I would

like to adhere to the description given by Ellis (2007), who states that, 'Doing autoethnography involves a back-and-forth movement between experiencing and examining a vulnerable self and observing and revealing the broader context of that experience' (p. 14).

The data resulting from using this type of introspection on our personal lives and experiences can be in the form of a poem, a narrative or a story. It is because of this that rhetorical structure is varied in autoethnography, from formal literary texts to more informal accounts or stories. Some authors feel that researchers need to be storytellers (Wolcott, 1994). For others autoethnography should be able to capture readers' minds and hearts (Ellis, 2000). It seems that there are no formal regulations regarding the writing of an autoethnographic account since it is the meaning that is important, not the production of a highly academic text.

In an attempt to draw researchers' attention to the different practice of what is named 'evocative or emotional autoethnography', Anderson (2006) makes a distinction between *analytic* and *evocative autoethnography*. He proposed a more analytic form of autoethnography

...in which the researcher is (1) a full member in the research group or setting, (2) visible as such a member in published texts, and (3) committed to developing theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena (p. 373).

Thus, analytic autoethnography is directed towards objective writing and analysis of a particular group, whereas evocative autoethnography aims toward researchers' introspection on a particular topic to allow readers to make a connection with the researchers' feelings and experiences. In a different vein, Foley (2002) advocates more reflexive epistemological and

narrative practices, as he considers that they would make autoethnographies a more engaging and common genre which could contribute to bridging the gap between researchers and ordinary people. As Bochner and Ellis (1996) suggest, 'On the whole, autoethnographers don't want you to sit back as spectators; they want readers to feel and care and desire' (p. 24). It seems that evocative or emotional autoethnography is gaining ground in researchers' practice because of the connection it allows readers to their own lives. However, in addition to its advantages as a research method, there are also limitations and criticisms which need to be explored.

## **2.2 Advantages and limitations of autoethnography**

The main advantage of autoethnography is the ease of access to data since the researcher calls on his or her own experiences as the source from which to investigate a particular phenomenon. It is this advantage that also entails a limitation as, by subscribing analysis to a personal narrative, the research is also limited in its conclusions. However, Bochner and Ellis (1996) consider that this limitation on the self is not valid, since, 'If culture circulates through all of us, how can autoethnography be free of connection to a world beyond the self?' (p. 24).

An important advantage, I believe, is the potential of autoethnography to contribute to others' lives by making them reflect on and empathise with the narratives presented. Through reading a cultural or social account of an experience, some may become aware of realities that have not been thought of before, which makes autoethnography a valuable form of inquiry. Personally, I consider that any piece of research should have a beneficial or practical goal for all the people involved in it. The purposes of autoethnography may be as varied as the topics it deals with. However, writing

accounts of research should always have the goal of informing and educating others, which is an objective that autoethnographies might accomplish through making connections with personal experiences of readers. Another advantage of writing autoethnographically is that it allows the researcher to write first person accounts which enable his or her voice to be heard, and thus provide him or her with a transition from being an outsider to an insider in the research.

Another advantage is acknowledged by Richards (2008), who sees autoethnography as emancipatory discourse since ‘...those being emancipated are representing themselves, instead of being colonized by others and subjected to their agendas or relegated to the role of second-class citizens’ (p. 1724). Thus, autoethnography represents for many the right to tell their truth as experienced without waiting for others to express what they really want to be known and understood.

Despite the advantages of autoethnography as a method of research mentioned above, there are also some limitations which need to be borne in mind. For example, the feelings evoked in readers may be unpleasant since the connections readers make to narratives cannot be predicted (Bochner and Ellis, 1996). Another limitation is the exposure it implies of the researcher’s inner feelings and thoughts, which require honesty and willingness to self-disclose. This limitation also entails many ethical questions which sometimes may be very difficult for the researcher to answer, making autoethnographies a complicated method to follow.

## **2.3 Ethical considerations**

One of the main features of autoethnography is its emphasis on the self and it is this specific feature that entails the problematic ethical considerations of the method (Ellis, 2007). As a personal narrative is developed, the context and people interacting with the subject start to emerge in the reflexive practice (Ellis and Bochner, 2000). It is at this point when the problem of obtaining or not obtaining consent to be included in the narrative has to be considered. Evocative autoethnography includes the description of periods of researchers' lives that involve sensitive issues with regard to the researcher and the people around him or her (Wall, 2008). Due to this, special considerations have to be taken into account when referring to loved ones, such as family members, partners or close friends.

Evocative autoethnographies may be written in the first or third person. For some, using the third person gives a sense of distance from the events and the people being referred to. As explained in Ellis et al. (2007) in a statement by Denzin, 'I was just going to disguise myself because I still didn't have the freedom to – I hadn't given myself the freedom to – write that narrative in the first person' (p. 317). For others, the first person seems to be the only way to be completely explicit about the events being analysed. In a reflection on a narrative he wrote, Wyatt (2006) admits changing some parts of his narrative from first to third person because it gives him a certain distance. For autoethnographers, Wyatt says, the first ethical principle should be, '...how close we choose to position our readers' (p. 814). The second principle is the one of consent. In describing critical periods of our lives it may be very difficult to ask the people involved in these narratives to give consent to their publication. However, it seems that getting formal consent does not help



researchers deal with the feelings of guilt and harm they may have when writing autoethnographic accounts (Ellis, 2007; Wall, 2008). Ellis (2007) adds a dimension to ethics in autoethnography: *relational ethics*, which refers to the ethics involved in writings about personal experiences where intimate others are included. Should we ask consent from the people involved in autoethnographic narratives? It seems that there are no straightforward responses to this or to other ethical questions that may arise when engaged in autoethnography. As Ellis (2007) puts it:

The bad news is that there are no definitive rules or universal principles that can tell you precisely what to do in every situation or relationship you may encounter, other than the vague and generic "do no harm" (p. 6).

This generic rule of no harm was not clear enough in its application for Wall (2008), who, in spite of having consent from her family to write about her experience as an adoptive mother, was not free from feelings of guilt, as she expresses:

I had a persistent and significant sense of anxiety about the tension between proceeding with an academic project and telling a story about my life that was inextricably intertwined with my son's (p. 49).

Along the same lines, Megford (2006) felt hurt when reading an autoethnographic account which erased her and made a part of her life that had some value for her disappear. She states:

...when writing autoethnographically, we are forced to hold a critical mirror to our lives, and sometimes looking in that mirror by candlelight is more flattering than looking into the mirror in broad daylight (p. 859).

Although there are many issues to consider when engaging in autoethnography, I agree with Ellis (2007) who considers that the main

criterion to bear in mind is that '...autoethnography itself is an ethical practice' (p. 26). Writing autoethnographically entails being ethical and honest about the events described as well as the content of words expressed by all the people involved in these events.

## **2.4 Criticisms of the method**

As Sparkes (2000) has stated, 'The emergence of autoethnography and narratives of self...has not been trouble-free, and their status as proper research remains problematic' (p. 22). The most recurrent criticism of autoethnography is of its strong emphasis on self, which is at the core of the resistance to accepting autoethnography as a valuable research method. Thus, autoethnographies have been criticised for being self-indulgent, narcissistic, introspective and individualised (Atkinson, 1997; Coffey, 1999). Another criticism is of the reality personal narratives or autoethnographies represent, or, as Walford (2004) puts it, 'If people wish to write fiction, they have every right to do so, but not every right to call it research' (p. 411). This criticism originates from a statement by Ellis and Bochner (2000), conceiving autoethnography as a narrative that, '...is always a story about the past and not the past itself' (p. 745). An opposite view is that of Walford (2004), who asserts that '...the aim of research is surely to reduce the distortion as much as possible' (p. 411). Walford's concerns are focused on how much of the accounts presented as autoethnographies represent real conversations or events as they happened, and how much they are just inventions of the authors.

According to Ellis and Bochner (2000), recreating the past in a narrative way represents an '...existential struggle to move life forward' (p. 746). For them, the subjectivity of the researcher is assumed and accepted as the value of

autoethnography. Bochner and Ellis (1996) consider that a useful aim of personal narratives '... is to allow another person's world of experience to inspire critical reflection on your own' (p. 22). Thus, the aim of autoethnography is to recreate the researcher's experience in a reflexive way, aiming at making a connection to the reader which can help him or her to think and reflect about his or her own experiences. This has led to the criticism of considering the main goal of autoethnography as therapeutic rather than analytic (Atkinson, 1997). Indeed, Walford (2004) sees no value in this type of autoethnography, since a social research report should aim at presenting organised, logical claims supported by empirical data. It is perhaps the closeness of the author to the phenomenon under investigation that causes such criticism. If researchers are supposed to be as distant as possible from the research in order to present as objective a truth as possible, how can this be accomplished by autoethnography? However, as Denzin and Lincoln (2000b) state, 'Objective reality can never be captured. We can know a thing only through its representations' (p. 5). Thus, the richness of autoethnography is in those realities that emerge from the interaction between the self and its own experiences that reflect the cultural and social context in which those events took place. It is through this representation that understanding of a particular phenomenon is accomplished.

## **2.5 Evaluation of autoethnography**

The problem of evaluating qualitative research has been a perennial struggle for those engaged in these practices. Autoethnography has no specific rules or criteria to adhere to since it can be approached using diverse types of genre. Due to the particular characteristics of autoethnography, the reactions to a personal narrative cannot be foreseen and the interpretation may be varied (Bochner and Ellis, 1996). Thus, the subjective interpretations that may

arise from personal narratives oppose the positivist view of research which aims at presenting an objective account of the truth. In addition, the personal and emotional involvement of the researcher in autoethnography contrasts with the distant and objective role of researchers' goals in a positivist stance. It is because of this that evaluating autoethnography is not a straightforward task and it seems that a general consensus has not been reached. As Richardson (2000b) suggests, 'Although we are all roughly categorized as 'poststructural ethnographers', we have different takes on the ethnographic project' (p. 252).

However, we can find some guidelines for an evaluation of an autoethnographic account. For Megford (2006), the only criteria should be '...the criteria by which we evaluate ourselves as we write' (p. 861). Since there are no criteria to evaluate autoethnography, and what is presented as truth can encompass some omissions or changes, Megford (2006) proposes that *the primary ethical standard* against which any autoethnography should be evaluated is 'an ethic of accountability' in which the writer should write his or her truth as if all the people involved in those events were listening to him or her. In doing this, Megford (2006) suggests writers should be aware that:

Our subjects might disagree with our representation of shared experiences or they might question our decision to write about an experience in the first place, but we should be willing to confront these issues, even when avoiding them by quietly publishing our work in academic journals/texts is a viable alternative (p. 862).

Richardson (2000a, p. 254) suggests that autoethnography should be evaluated as science and as art, and proposes five criteria against which to evaluate any autoethnography: substantive contribution, aesthetic merit, reflexivity, the impact the narrative causes the reader, and how much the

narrative expresses a reality. It is important to note that Richardson's criteria refer to all types of ethnography including autoethnography, so it may be that some of the criteria proposed are not applicable to all types of autoethnography, which takes diverse forms and genres. For Ellis (2000), a good autoethnographic narrative should be able to engage your feeling and thinking capacities at the same time as generating in the reader questions regarding the experience, the position of the author, how the reader may have experienced the event described, or what the reader may have learned.

For me, autoethnography is educational research since, as expressed by Bochner and Ellis (2006), it '...show(s) people in the process of figuring out what to do, how to live and what their struggles mean' (p. 111). In doing so, people are not only building meaning in their lives, but through these evocative narratives others may be able to reflect on similar experiences and then be able to do something beneficial for themselves and for others.

As stated above, autoethnography, as with all research methods, has advantages and disadvantages. However, it was chosen as the instrument through which to explore my own emotions during my years as a foreign language learner because it represented a tool that could allow me to make a connection between my previous role as a foreign language learner and my current role as a researcher. Autoethnography allowed me to go back to those moments when I felt insecure and lost in the process of learning a foreign language. Thus, it made me consider the feelings my future research participants may go through during the data generation process. It gave me the advantage of writing third person accounts in order to detach myself from those painful moments and to protect the people involved in the narratives. It also enabled me to reflect on the events presented using first person accounts

in order to convey what I considered relevant to explain the reasons I may have felt in certain ways. It helped me to understand that reflection was going to be required from students in order to get to the core of their emotional arousal.

Reflection could be a tool to empower students to change their perceptions as foreign language learners and, hopefully, as human beings. Through reflection students may decide to take specific steps to help themselves face or tackle their emotions and consequently advance in their foreign language learning development.

Emotions are not easy to investigate since they are not observable but individually experienced by human beings. Due to this feature of emotions, autoethnography was selected as the most suitable method to approach my own emotional experiences during my foreign language learning development. I found the task challenging but at the same time educational, not only on the professional side, but also on the personal one. While the use of this method with regard to my personal experience was aimed at helping me refine my research focus and questions, it also gave me the confidence that this piece of research could be very beneficial for foreign language learners and teachers. Before presenting two emotional accounts of events that occurred during my foreign language learning experience, the ethical procedures followed during the writing of these accounts are described below.

## **2.6 Foreign language learning narrative ethical procedures**

The narratives that follow this section describe two events: one during my life as a university student and another in my first year as a teacher in a primary school. These two events were the ones that kept coming to my mind when

thinking about emotional moments in my life as a language learner. Both events were situated in classrooms and due to this there were some people interacting with me. One of them, a very good friend, is still an active participant in my personal and professional life. Although we do not live in the same city, we communicate frequently and have shared some professional activities together. I do not want to expose any of the people included in my narrative and so their names have been changed. The people included in the narratives and reflections of these, are important in the understanding of the issues I talked about. As I was recalling particular moments during my life as a student, these two accounts came to me as the main sources of my emotions in my academic life. This was surprising and interesting for me because it made me realise the strong influence of my childhood in my incipient academic life. Although the people included in my personal accounts of my emotions are not expected to read these considerations of my student life, the narratives have been written on the understanding that they may read them at any time.

As I was writing, I realised that I could not let some parts of the manuscript be seen by another person. There were some personal details included that I thought should remain private. These parts were edited and some were erased since, as you will read, I find it difficult and challenging to express and share personal issues. Thus, expressing my emotional experience was hard and painful at some points during writing but, at the same time, helpful. It made me feel relieved and somehow accept that even though I am not what others may expect, I am a valuable person. It also made me aware that in order to become the person I am now; I had to go through all these experiences.

What follows is an account of two turning points in my academic life described as honestly and accurately as possible. These two accounts describe important situations in my foreign language learning experience. Showing or describing your inner feelings and emotions is not easy, so after writing, I started a reflection on my narrative. Thus, these descriptions and the following reflection aim at presenting two examples of the arousal of emotions in the process of learning a foreign language. Reflection on the reasons and causes of these emotions can contribute to raising awareness about our strengths and weaknesses not only as learners but as human beings. Thus, awareness can push us to work on those less strong features that need development in order to help us become better learners and people.

As mentioned above, evocative narratives can be written as first or third person accounts depending on the choice of the autoethnographer. In my case, I decided to write these two accounts in the third person since it allowed me to be not only a participant but also an observer of the situations; it gave me certain distance from the events. However, the commentaries in-between and my reflections about these two moments are in the first person since I felt it was the best way to convey meaning. Thus, writing allowed me to feel and think at the same time, going from recalling my feelings and then reflecting on why those feelings may have emerged. My reflections, as you will read, emerged after reading the following two descriptions of emotional events.

## **2.7 My foreign language learning emotional experiences**

After being encouraged to write my own story as a foreign language learner as a way to reflect on my own research focus, I started to think about my days at university. Although most of the literature I have reviewed highlights the pervasive role of the foreign language teacher in students' motivation



fluctuation and emotional arousal, my own story was not inclined towards a specific teacher as the source of my emotions while learning English in Mexico. I tried to think of a teacher who made my learning experience hell, but I could not recall such an evil! I then started to think about specific events.

### **2.7.1 Feelings of frustration I**

I recall having enjoyed my days at university not because of the academic parts but because I was very active on the social side. I was involved in some extracurricular activities which helped me get to know students from different disciplines and years. However, my academic experience was not as good as expected since I found the study of the English language very difficult. Everything was new to me. In one of my crises, I called my father to tell him I was going to quit the major in English language teaching. I had been studying for a degree in French during the mornings and for the English degree during the afternoon sessions, so I had little time to practise or study. I had thought of changing to the school of Psychology so I could start that degree; however, due to administrative regulations, I was not able to do so. My father advised me to leave the French degree, saying that I needed to concentrate on one major and English was the primary one, so I left the French degree. My father then paid for morning classes in a private institute so I could start with the language from the very beginning. These classes gave me confidence and, little by little, I started to feel more secure in my English language knowledge. I think of this particular moment as a turning point in my life since it was as if I was deciding that my future would be committed to finishing the degree in English and, from that moment, all my efforts were concentrated on obtaining the degree. It was like making the decision that had not been made when I decided to study English in the first place. I had not known what to study at university and I registered in the English degree because of a suggestion from

my sister, not because I had really made a proper decision about what to do with my future. Thinking back, I recall feeling lost in my first English courses at university since my classmates already knew the basics of the language. It was very difficult. I felt confused, stupid and fearful when being asked something I did not understand. But most of all, I felt frustrated as a learner.

Universidad de la vida. México 1987.

Again to class with Miss Green... all the class ran to the classroom to get there on time. As usual, she started the class with a vocabulary activity in which the students had to repeat words and she would show the group how to pronounce them. Mariana hated to be evaluated in speaking and pronunciation. She was struggling with vocabulary, meanings and grammar and having to perform dialogues in front of the whole class so Miss Green could correct them was really stressful. *Doesn't the teacher know this is really embarrassing? Learners just know each other... Most of the students in this class have studied English for years so they are better prepared to speak than others, especially me...* Mariana thought. As soon as she stopped talking to herself, Mariana heard Miss Green... "You two come to the front. You are going to perform the following dialogue in front of the class. Did you study the vocabulary I gave you last class? Yes...well we'll see it." Mariana wanted to die right there. She was the lucky one that day. She stood up and her legs started to shake. Mariana hit one of them to try to stop their embarrassing movements. Gina and Mariana started the dialogue; Mariana's voice was quivering, her mind was blank, and she replied to her classmate's lines without thinking too much. She just wanted that moment to finish. It lasted for ages. Gina was moving around and acting, but Mariana was stuck in the same place without moving because she feared fainting in front of the class. Mariana's lines were very short, quick answers. Gina's lines were more elaborate, and she was making them up. Miss Green would smile warmly at Gina's lines and would freeze at Mariana's. Why did Mariana have to be so concerned about people's reactions to her speaking? They finally got to the end of the dialogue. "Very good, Gina, you are demonstrating you have studied hard. You are a natural actress, aren't you?" The whole class clapped. "Mariana, your pronunciation is terrible and you did not act at all. You need to work hard." Mariana asked herself if this was a drama class or something. She ran to her chair and sat, feeling her face going red. Why did the

teacher have to make those remarks in front of the whole class? Ximena approached Mariana and whispered, "Gina beat you". Mariana did not say a word. She already felt humiliated enough and now the person she considered to be her best friend was rubbing her lack of speaking skills in her face.

### **2.7.2 Feelings of frustration II**

The second episode in my narrative took place during my studies for a diploma in English language teaching. I started to teach English at university level because of an opportunity, but once there I realised I was not really prepared to teach young adults. After working in that state university for eight months, I decided to study for a diploma to become better prepared and trained. During this period, I moved to a different city and found a job to support my studies since I was supporting myself. Speaking was and still is the skill that made me feel really uneasy, and in my new workplace speaking came out as the primary source of emotions. The head teacher tested my pronunciation and vocabulary almost every day and once or twice a week he would come into my class to evaluate me. These evaluations and observations took place at the same time as I was being observed for my Diploma for Overseas Teachers of English (DOTE), but the focus and manner were very different. Thus, what follows is a third person account of one of those informal observation episodes in my first year of teaching.

#### **Primary school Benito Juárez, México 1994.**

Mariana had to get up at 5:30am every morning to get to work on time. She had decided to study for a diploma in ELT after realising that her BA degree had not prepared her to face the demands of teaching English at university level. After finishing her BA she had spent two years working as an *au pair* in New York. Although this period was very beneficial for her it did not prepare her to become

a university English teacher. She had found a job as a science teacher in a private primary school, where she had to teach the subject in English. Teaching children was complex, but teaching science in English was even more difficult. She had to get to school at 8am every day to prepare everything for her classes. She was in charge of three different groups and enjoyed being with children and colleagues. However, her boss and the owner of the school was a newcomer to the city who had set up this new school in the area. He was the head teacher and coordinated all activities in the school. Every time Mariana saw him approaching her class, her voice would start to stutter and tremble. As Mariana was a new teacher in the school he observed her almost every day, since she was teaching science in English. Mariana knew what would happen: Rodrigo would come and sit at the back of the class, stay there observing and evaluating her, and then at some point he would stand up and start teaching the class. Mariana felt like one of the children in class being shown how to do things. Rodrigo concentrated on her speaking, correcting her or asking for different vocabulary in order to test her. She hated those moments and she felt so humiliated. She felt that he was telling her "You are not a well-prepared teacher". Fortunately the children were not aware of what was happening. Sometimes Mariana would cry after one of these observations. Some of the teachers realised what was happening and told her to stop Rodrigo but she did not know how to.... Six months passed, Mariana got a job in a private institute giving classes to children, teenagers and adults. The institute was new and Mariana was happy teaching at this place. She had three different groups every afternoon. She enjoyed the classes and the salary allowed her to pay for the diploma she was studying. She was learning many things at the institute and she had the opportunity to talk to her colleagues about things she was not sure about. She was studying for a Diploma in ELT so she felt more confident about her teaching skills.

Thinking about how these emotional moments made my motivation fluctuate, I think that in both cases the fear of not being considered a good student and a good teacher made me act to find ways to overcome the limitations I had. Firstly, as a student I studied English for two years in a private institute in the mornings in order to get to the level most of my classmates were at. Later, after realising I was not really trained to teach, I registered in different courses

to become a better teacher. Although fear may be considered a negative emotion, I believe it can have both positive and negative effects: it can stop you from doing things or it can push you to try to demonstrate that you can do those things. In my case, fear moved me to act. Firstly, it made me look for a strategy to complete my English language major, by taking extracurricular courses. Secondly, it pushed me to take teacher training courses in my first year of teaching to overcome my lack of teaching skills.

## **2.8 Reflections about my two emotional experiences**

The previous narratives were written as a task to clarify my research focus and define those questions I would need to ask my research participants in order to understand the role emotions played in their language learning motivation in Mexico. Another purpose of these narratives was to explore my emotional experiences as a foreign language learner and the way they have shaped my motivation. Also, it was an opportunity to understand the cultural context where the research was done. In order to explore my emotional experiences, reflection was necessary. According to Boud et al. (1985a) in a learning context, reflection is:

'... a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations' (p. 19).

In order to analyse my two emotional moments it was necessary to go back to my writing and do what Schön (1983) calls 'reflection on action' (a retrospective analysis of an event). Through reflection we learn by posing questions to those actions we are doing or have done, and our answers to those questions give us new knowledge and awareness that can be applied to new situations. My reflections emerged while reading my two personal

narratives; it was surprising to me the different people and events that came to my mind, as well as the revelations reflection was bringing to my understanding. Due to my literature review and my own experience as teacher, I thought before engaging in the process of writing that some teachers would emerge as having influenced my motivational energy during my foreign language learning years; however, what came out from my reflections was something I had not expected. As Boud et al. (1985b) explain, reflection '...is an active process of exploration and discovery which often leads to very unexpected outcomes' (p. 7). Reflection was an important step in trying to understand the role of my emotions in my foreign language learning experience. Reflection is considered a means to deepen our emotional understanding (Ellis, 1991). Reflection made me aware of the need to understand my participants in order to present a reliable account of their experiences.

In going back to my writing some themes emerged as predominant in my emotional struggle through the years as a foreign language learner in Mexico. My memories took me to different periods of my childhood and spaces of my family environment, my consciousness of being different in character from most of my family members, the recognisance that *fear* has been the most pervasive emotion in my personal and academic life: fear of feeling embarrassed, of being judged, of being evaluated, of being of no worth.

My reflection uncovered the following themes immersed in my emotional experiences: cultural influence, voice, introjects, difference, journeying and responsibility. These are discussed below.

### **2.8.1 Cultural Influence: Mexican cultural heritage hindered my personal and professional development**

As a perennial language learner, the skill that makes me feel uneasy is speaking because I feel afraid of not being understood or of mispronouncing words. Although I always tell to myself that the important thing is to communicate, the fear of being judged is always there. This may have something to do with my cultural background as a student. In Mexico, as in many other countries, school grades are very important. I was a 'very good' student before starting my BA in English language teaching. I got excellent grades in my subjects; my parents were very proud of this and so was I. I never thought that being intelligent could be measured in another way. In my primary, secondary and preparatory years all that was expected of me was to memorise by heart paragraphs or specific information to rewrite neatly in exams or to repeat to the teacher in order to get the best grade. I was very good at this and I think that the idea of not being able to repeat words with the same pronunciation as a native speaker made me felt very bad, since that meant that I was not intelligent anymore. I felt stupid repeating words and phrases that did not sound like my teachers' or like the tapes we were played in classes.

I had never been asked to express my opinions or to talk about myself or anything in my previous school years. The new approach used at the university level of learning English and performing dialogues in front of the class were a completely different world for me. I think that this new approach in learning and my personal characteristics combined to make me felt that I was not a good learner and made me very embarrassed about having to talk in front of people in a different language that did not sound as expected. I have never been a talkative person so I believe the embarrassment of having

to speak in a foreign language was stronger than that of having to speak in Spanish.

Mexico is considered to be a country undergoing development, so since Mexicans are small children we are told that we have to work hard in order to have a better life. The best way to prepare for that is to study hard and get the best grades possible in order to get a well-paid job. I believe that for most parents in Mexico, their dream is that their sons and daughters will get university degrees because this will give them the possibility to get a good job and have a better lifestyle. I also believe that this fear of not being able to have a better lifestyle is a great motivating factor in Mexican culture. It is interesting because we are social entities who react to a specific stimulus with our entire social and cultural heritage. As Bochner and Ellis (1996) put it, '...culture circulates through all of us ...' (p. 24).

### **2.8.2 Voice: Are my words valuable?**

During my learning process, the activities that really made me anxious and nervous were speaking activities. In one of the first classes of my first term at university, a teacher used to make us perform dialogues in front of the class in pairs. After performing a speaking activity with a classmate, my best friend approached me and told me "She performed better than you". My best friend had studied English for about four years before entering university. She could already hold a conversation in English. I had only had English classes at secondary and preparatory school, and I just knew basic words and expressions. I knew my performance had not been a good one but I had tried and I was there to learn. That observation from my best friend made me feel depressed and sad. I think it also discouraged me even more from talking. I consider my friend to be a very intelligent and verbal person. Her observation



made me feel that I was not. In class, I used to do everything – grammar exercises, reading activities and listening activities where you only have to fill in information – with no problems. I enjoyed them, but if I had to talk my voice would sound strange and my legs would start shaking. I have a problem with being heard in general. I think I do not like to have the spotlight on my face. Being in a class with students is fine, but having to make a presentation of a paper or something like that makes me really anxious and afraid. I am afraid of being evaluated or judged...Why am I so afraid? Why do I not consider my words, my 'voice', to be valuable?

My mother is very proud to say that I was a very quiet and obedient child. She says that with a disapproving look she could stop me and my siblings from being naughty. When I read about self-determination theory and how controlling teachers hinder autonomy in learners, I thought about my mother. I related it to my upbringing. I am the oldest daughter in my house ...I am supposed to be an example for my younger sisters. My oldest brother did not fit the model my parents expected ...so I think that the entire burden was placed on me...and still is. I am the one everyone in my family calls as soon as a problem arises. My mother is always telling me how proud she is but sometimes I feel I would like to escape from being the one that can always be called on... I would like to be the irresponsible one.

Thus, since I was very young I was not asked for opinions, nor asked to express my feelings either at home or at school. Besides, my personal characteristics did not help in making me more expressive and less fearful. I think the combination of my personal characteristics and my upbringing sparked that pervasive fear of talking or being heard in Spanish or English.

### **2.8.3      Introjects: Mexican cultural heritage permeated me**

Thinking about my own experience I realised that I had known I had to study something in order to be able to get a good job because that is something relatives and parents always tell you whenever they have the chance. However, in my case, the right to go to university had to be won since my father thought that women should be at home and men at work. Since I was a child I have experienced that women are different, at least in my father's eyes. The best chicken pieces were saved for my two brothers. We, the three women, had to help my mother clean the house and tidy up my brothers' room. My brothers were free to do as they wished but we women had to ask permission for everything. Although my mother did not share my father's point of view, she submitted to it. However, when the time came, my mother fought for a university education for us. Although my father was reluctant, he finally agreed. Thus, the fear of not being able to prove to my father that I was as capable as any of my brothers and of disappointing my mother was what made me continue trying in order to achieve a university degree. Later, when facing the demands of a group of students I realised I needed to become better prepared. In this second stage of my life nobody pressured me to continue studying, but it may be that all my already intrinsic values, further shaped by the people and environment in which I was brought up, were so strongly rooted that they had become my own inner values. For Ryan and Deci (2000) this process of internalisation:

... refers to people's 'taking in' a value or regulation, and integration refers to the further transformation of that regulation into their own so that, subsequently, it will emanate from their sense of self (p. 71).

#### **2.8.4      Difference: Why I am not like the rest of my family?**

The process of learning a foreign language is replete with feelings of frustration, embarrassment and fear. Fear... I wish I could recall more events from my childhood. I have always been a very shy and quiet person. I like to listen and I like silence. I do not really enjoy speaking in public, no matter the language, and I think I am not a very good speaker. This is very rare in the context I come from. I am from Veracruz, which is considered to be the Mexican state where people are warm, talk loudly, party wildly and enjoy being noisy. The Veracruz carnival is the loudest, most famous and best attended in Mexico. I do enjoy partying, dancing and talking to my friends, but I am not a very expressive person. My mother and sisters are all the opposite, but I resemble my father. I have so much of him in me. I wish I could be more like my mother or sisters, but I am not. I remember that I used to cover my ears so I did not have to continue listening to my sister talking and talking when we were about to sleep. She would never stop. My mother enjoys recalling those nights when I used to turn off the lights and cover my ears to force my sister to be quiet. However, I have always envied that facility they all have (my mother and sisters) to relate to other people, to tell you a story so vividly that you can see it, to express their feelings openly. My mother loves to talk, she enjoys it, and she withers if she does not talk to people. If we are supposed to learn all those social skills from our mothers...why not me? Why are my biological genes stronger than my nurturing? I think I am fighting my nature because I like to interact with people but I am very independent as well, and I do need time to be on my own daily. I like to be alone, to think, to organise my mind.

On rereading the previous paragraph, I notice a phrase I wrote: *I do not really enjoy speaking in public, no matter the language, and I think I am not a very good speaker.* I was reflecting on my language learning process, and the

outstanding emotional feature there was fear of talking. Fear of mispronouncing words, fear of sounding stupid, fear of being judged on my accent, fear of my intellectual capacity being measured, and fear of speaking up. Has this natural fear interfered with my foreign language learning? It has not only interfered with my language learning process, but also with all aspects of my life.

Thinking about my years as a student, I cannot recall being afraid of a teacher but I can still feel that fear of being judged or maybe not being accepted in the classroom because of my lack of speaking skills. This fear is still present but I believe this fear originated because of a low sense of self-worth. This is not new to me...I consider myself a strong person, a person who tries hard to achieve the goals I have set. But I am a very insecure person... What has driven me, in spite of my low self-esteem and my perception of my lack of verbal skills (no matter the language)? I do not know if it is a natural desire to be a better person... to be a better person has always been my main goal because I believe that personal improvement leads to improvement in all areas of your life. I want to be a good mother and sometimes I see myself doing things I do not want to repeat. My mother is the most important person in my life but despite my wholehearted love for her I am able to see those things that I do not want to repeat...I want my daughters to be happy, independent and responsible human beings.

My fear has made me move in different directions to avoid things I do not want to experience. Fear as a negative feeling may be considered to hinder learning and improvement...I believe that in my case my fears have made me move and act. My fears are the things that have made me go further...the things that have pushed me to try and try to accomplish my goals. Someone

told me once that my quiet personality was something good. I do not know....sometimes I do not agree but I have started to accept my nature. I have also discovered that acting differently makes me feel uneasy and artificial. I believe that your feelings and emotions are the things that make you move. Although negative feelings can be considered to be bad for learning, my fear of talking has pushed me to do it; I have had some bad experiences but they have not stopped me. I think that in spite of my personality features, I realised I needed to start facing my fears and trying to live with them. Thus, awareness helped me to accept that the negative feeling was there; however, my desire to be a good learner and a better teacher was as strong as that negative feeling, and so it may be that positive feelings or desires diminished my fear.

### **2.8.5      Journeying: Not having a stable life**

My father used to work in a construction company and because of that we used to move to different cities, houses and schools every two or three years, always having to make new friends. Sometimes it was good to be the 'new' student but after a few years I began to feel very apprehensive about sacrificing our new stability to follow my father. Fortunately this ended when I started university. Although I now have a stable job and a stable environment, I have gone to different cities and countries to undertake certain academic activities that I have decided to do; however this recent experience of being in the UK has made me aware of how much I need my stability back....or it is just a facet of getting older?

### **2.8.6 Responsibility: An inherited value**

Responsibility is something I would like to forget. I inherited male responsibility from my brother when I was in second grade. I did not know my brother was different until I was told by my younger sister that some boys were calling him names and hitting him. I ran to the schoolyard and started to hit those boys so that they would leave my brother alone. I did not know what the word *marica* meant and I did not understand until some years later. My brother is gay, but I think for my parents this was very difficult to understand, particularly for my father coming from a very macho small town in Mexico. My brother's sexual orientation was something my parents tried to deny until it was no longer possible. Latin families consider that the oldest son should be a role model for their younger siblings as well as supporting his parents economically in their older years. Although this was not explicitly stated, the responsibility of the oldest son was passed to me since my brother, in spite of being a very intelligent human being, has shown himself to be very irresponsible since his early youth. I think that my father's views plus my mother's protection made him irresponsible. I believe I internalised that I needed to be responsible so much that sometimes I feel I need freedom, I need to be irresponsible, and I want to be the one who needs help. Is this responsibility chip that I possess what kept me going until I finished my degree, and what made me look for training courses to be a better prepared teacher?

### **2.9 Understandings and appreciations of my reflections**

In thinking about my experiences, my emotions and my language learning history, my family experience and environment continues to mix with my reflections and questions about why things did or did not emerge. According to Ellis and Bochner (2000), autoethnographies:

...long to be used rather than analyzed; to be told and retold rather than theorized and settled; to offer lessons for further conversation rather than undebatable conclusions; and to substitute the companionship of intimate detail for the loneliness of abstracted facts (p. 744).

As a whole person I cannot separate who I am (Mariza Méndez from Mexico) from what I am (a Mexican English teacher). This reminds me of a teacher training class in which I ask my students how they are as people and how they want to be as teachers. Most of them assign different characteristics to their personal and professional personas, as if they could transform into someone else just by entering the classroom. I wanted to focus this reflection solely on my language learning experience and how it shaped my motivation, but it is not possible: I am who I am because of all my personal, social, familial, academic and professional experiences or, as Biddulph (2005), put it '... relationships and behaviours, values and attitudes are simultaneously separate and yet connected (no matter how distantly)' (p. 56). It is because of this interconnection between different aspects of my life that I cannot separate the language learner aspects from the Mexican girl growing up in Mexico. When asking myself how I felt during my language learning studies different feelings came to my mind, but the two events described above were the ones that my memory recalled more vividly than any others.

In my writing I also asked many times about the relationship between my life and my performance as a language learner. It is difficult to try to match how I felt to what I experienced in my early years. The constant questions in my mind are: Is this really important enough to be written here in a doctoral thesis? How does this relate to my work as an English teacher? Do my colleagues consider that this work has a pragmatic value? Will students consider it important to talk about their emotions? How do they deal with their emotions in the process of learning a foreign language? Are they conscious of

the emotions aroused in the course of learning a foreign language? It was reassuring to read Clandinin and Connelly (2000) stating that 'But as we make the transition from field texts to research texts, questions (such as *Who cares?* and *So what ?*) reemerge' (p. 120) . This made me think about some teachers in my workplace who are rejected by students, rejected because they generate in students such feelings of frustration, impotence and humiliation that the students even dare to write letters to the head of department asking for that teacher not to be assigned to any of their courses. I think this is not exclusive to my workplace. In other places, students may not explicitly express their rejection of a particular teacher, but it is common knowledge that there are some teachers that make students feel humiliated or ignorant. I believe these teachers consider that this strategy or methodology *motivates* students.

Thus, my work is significant because knowing how students feel in specific situations in classrooms and how the emotions aroused in classrooms affect students' motivation fluctuation in foreign language learning is going to be educational for other language learners and teachers. As Powell (1985) states:

The reconstruction of educational history offers rich opportunities for gaining insights into the nature of teaching and learning and the effects of the environment in which these activities take place (p. 50).

Autoethnography as a research method was an unknown and difficult tool for me to use: difficult because it was very painful to go back to those moments and revive those feelings of frustration and fear. During writing, I found myself crying because it was challenging to recall those moments as I struggled to describe the events carefully in order to protect myself. Expressing how I felt was very difficult and embarrassing. It is not easy to self-disclose your feelings



about specific events. It is like exposing yourself in a shop window; it made me feel vulnerable. However, the process made me aware that I had to go through all those experiences to become the person I am now. All those events made me stronger, helped me to mature, and to understand myself better.

Autoethnography proved to be a suitable way to elicit reasons for and sources of emotions in specific situations. It was a very helpful path to follow in order to refine my research focus and purpose, but it also helped me to consider other issues involved in the study. It raised many questions and doubts about how best to approach research participants in the future in order to help them express the emotions felt while in the process of learning a foreign language. It also made me aware that autoethnography is a very sensitive method that some of my research participants would find difficult, as it requires the willingness to self-disclose. However, it also gave me the confidence that the research methods selected to be used with my research participants were the most suitable to approach the topic and to fulfil the purpose of the study. In order to generate data from my research participants, three main data collection methods were selected as the most suitable: students' personal narratives, an Emotional Reactions Journal, and semi-structured interviews. Fundamentally, autoethnography made me aware of how sensitive the topic might be for research participants, so a careful approach to data generation should be exercised.

Finally, the process of autoethnography made me realise the importance of the topic for the development of students' whole education. Although not officially, emotions seem to have been erased from educational settings since they are considered to hinder academic goals. However, educational

discourse emphasises the need to help students develop in an integrated way. I believe that allowing students to think and reflect on their emotions will have a positive impact not only on their academic development but also on their personal development. By letting students link their emotions with their foreign language learning process, a whole person education, which is one of the goals of the Mayche University, can be achieved.

## **2.10 Summary**

This chapter has introduced autoethnography as a research method. Two personal narratives were presented as a way for me to experience first-hand the process of working with emotions in language learning. Awareness was developed about the sensitivity of the topic and the difficulty there may be for the researcher in trying to encourage students to participate in the study and to share their intimate feelings about the complex process of learning a foreign language. Finally, the themes revealed by my two personal narratives have been discussed, emphasising the pervasive role of Mexican culture on my two emotional experiences in my personal language learning history.

The following chapter will present a review of the literature on humanistic education, motivation theories and emotions in general education and foreign language learning.

# **Chapter 3**

## **Literature review**

### **3.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, Individual Differences (IDs) literature is reviewed to provide a historical development of the inclusion of affect in ELT methods and the main criticisms faced by this inclusion. A review of the four general motivation theories that have informed my study is presented in order to highlight their close links to learners' emotions. I then present a review of the L2 motivation theories relevant to the findings and interpretation of my study. Finally, a review of research in the area of emotions in general education and language learning is conducted to identify the range of emotional experiences faced by learners across settings and how these have affected their motivation.

### **3.1 Individual differences in second language acquisition**

The field of SLA emerged from the study of two main aspects: the language acquisition process and the factors influencing learners in this process. Early studies concentrated on describing how the process occurs and how some personal factors of learners influence the language proficiency achieved (Larsen-Freeman, 1991). Although researchers have identified individual learners' differences in SLA, initial research only focused on studying learners' similarities in order to establish general approaches to language teaching, e.g. dealing with learners' errors. Although this tradition of research was a valuable

one, another tradition started to develop in the early 1970s that led to the acknowledgement of various learners' contributions to the process of learning, since students are active participants in this (Ellis, 2004). These became referred to as Individual Differences (IDs).

IDs are particularly important to language learning and teaching since they are considered by SLA researchers to be the most influential factors leading a learner to succeed or fail in their learning process (Dörnyei, 2005). Thus, the decisive role of IDs in language learning has been the focus of a wide variety of research carried out in past years in the ELT field. In his classic review of IDs, Skehan (1989) points out that in spite of the increase of SLA research in the area of learner factors, there was at that time a lack of research focusing on differences, as the main focus of the research at the time was focused on finding similarities in students' learning processes. A line of research that considered finding out how students tackled their language learning processes and thus finding out how those differences impacted on the processes was the 'good language learner' (GLL) studies.

### **3.1.1 The Good Language Learner studies**

The Good Language Learner studies (GLL) started in the 1970s when research was carried out to identify the characteristics of GLLs. It began by trying to discover the steps or strategies used by GLLs so teachers could make use of these findings to help less able learners to better their performance. The first studies were those carried out by Stern (1975), Rubin (1975) and Naiman et al. (1978). These studies looked at different kinds of learners in different contexts, but what was interesting was that they were

unable to identify a set of strategies used exclusively by good language learners. However, these three studies were able to provide findings on the general characteristics of GLLs, which are presented in a comparative way in the table below to show how the studies' findings relate to each other. The major finding from these studies was that there were many different pathways to success

**Table 3.0: General characteristics of GLLs**

<b>Stern 1975</b>	<b>Rubin 1975</b>	<b>Naiman et al. 1978</b>
1. A personal learning style or positive learning strategy		1. Find a learning style that suits you
2. An active approach to the learning task		2. Involve yourself in the language learning process
3. A tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language and its speakers	1. He is a willing and accurate guesser	
4. Technical know-how of how to tackle a language		3. Take into account the demands that L2 learning imposes
5. A methodical but flexible approach, developing the new language into an ordered system and constantly revising it.	2. He is prepared to attend to form	4. Develop an awareness of language both as a system and as communication
6. Constant searching for meaning	3. He attends to meaning	
7. Willingness to practise	4.. He practises	
8. Willingness to use the language in real communication.	5. He has a strong drive to communicate, or to learn from communication	5. He is not inhibited.
9. Self-monitoring and critical sensitivity to language use	6. He monitors his own and the speech of others	6. Pay constant attention to expanding your language knowledge
10. Developing second language more and more as a separate reference system and learning to think in it		7. Develop the L2 as a separate system

The first findings to appear were Rubin's and Stern's lists, which were later confirmed and supported by Naiman et al. However, the latter reduced the list to seven characteristics. It can be seen from analysing the lists that the three

researchers agreed on four general aspects: (1) the active involvement of the learners in the learning process, e.g. an active approach to the learning task (Stern); Involving yourself in the language learning process (Naiman et al.); (2) constant analysis and use of language form but at the same time giving special attention to meaning, e.g. he is prepared to attend to form (Rubin); technical know-how of how to tackle a language (Stern); (3) a commitment to practise through communication, and 4) the importance of self-monitoring, e.g. self-monitoring and critical sensitivity to language use (Stern); paying constant attention to expanding your language knowledge (Naiman et al.).

### **3.1.2 Definition and taxonomies of Individual Differences**

IDs are defined by Dörnyei (2005) as ‘...characteristics or traits in respect of which individuals may be shown to differ from each other’ (p. 1). In the area of psychology, countless individual variances have been recognised. The ELT field has used those findings from psychology to enlighten the understanding of IDs in second and foreign language learning.

Although we may agree that we are different from any other individual in the world in many ways, an aspect of these differences in respect to language learning is **stability**. According to Dörnyei (2005), Individual Differences ‘...refer to dimensions of enduring personal characteristics that are assumed to apply to everybody and on which people differ by degree’ (p. 1). Thus, IDs are relatively stable features that learners display across the years and in diverse learning contexts. According to Ellis (1994, p. 469), research on IDs aims to answer the question of how language learners differ, the effects of those differences on learning outcomes, how these affect the L2 process and the interaction of IDs with instruction.

A range of IDs has been identified. In early IDs research, the age factor was popularly-researched, but it seems that it is not currently considered an area of interest (Ellis, 2004; Dörnyei, 2005). Aptitude guided the focus of research in the early 1990s and, according to Ellis (2004), an interest in this factor has been reawoken. We can also identify that personality is an area with diverse facets (anxiety, self-esteem, attitude, willingness to communicate, extroversion, sociability, empathy, inhibition etc.). Numerous studies have been carried out in this area, although some factors have been paid more attention than others (e.g. anxiety). The first two taxonomies of IDs developed by Skehan (1989) and Larsen-Freeman (1991) considered attitude and motivation to go hand-in-hand. Later, these factors were studied separately because motivation was considered to be the most influential factor in language learning (MacIntyre, 2002). Larsen-Freeman (2001) pointed out that attitudes have to be analysed, including all the possible effects of people around the learner. I consider that learners' attitudes change with the experience they have in class (classmates, learning activities and the teacher are powerful forces that shape learners' attitudes during any learning process). Attitudes towards the learning process may be determined by the development of motivation, and the factors that influence motivation are so varied that, in my opinion, no generally applicable conclusion about this can ever be reached.

The GLL studies triggered an interest in styles and strategies in learning. The first studies in this area were mainly descriptive, identifying characteristics learners need to develop, and helping students become aware of their learning styles (Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975; Naiman et al., 1978). The area of learner training has been an area of special interest, as it has a direct applicability to language teaching by helping learners develop greater effectiveness and more independence in learning (Dörnyei, 2005). Research

in this area continues to be developed, and it has given teachers a wide array of strategies to show students diverse ways to approach their language learning. Thus, the more strategies a learner is able to use, the better equipped he or she is to tackle his or her language learning process.

Recent IDs taxonomies are grouped by Larsen-Freeman (2001) into learner attributes, learner conceptualisations and learner actions, and by Ellis (2004) into abilities, propensities, learner cognitions about L2 learning and learner actions. Finally, the most recent taxonomy, presented by Dörnyei (2005), divides IDs into principal and others, including in the principal section those factors that he considers to be *key* IDs.

**Table 3.1: Individual Differences taxonomies**

Larsen & Freeman 2001	Ellis 2004	Dörnyei 2005
<b>Learner attributes</b> -age -aptitude -personality -disabilities -social identities	<b>Abilities</b> -intelligence -aptitude -memory	<b>Principal</b> -personality -ability/aptitude -motivation -learning styles -learning strategies (self-regulatory capacity)
<b>Learner conceptualisations</b> -motivation -attitude -cognitive style -beliefs	<b>Propensities</b> -learning style -motivation -anxiety -personality -willingness to communicate	<b>Others</b> -anxiety -self-esteem -creativity -willingness to communicate -learner beliefs
<b>Learner actions</b> -learning strategies	<b>Learner cognitions about L2 learning</b> -learner beliefs	
	<b>Learner actions</b> -learning strategies	



It can be seen that Larsen-Freeman and Ellis classify IDs according to personal attributes, cognitive conceptualisations of language learning and actions learners take to enhance the learning process. While Ellis considers intelligence a factor that should be included, Larsen-Freeman does not consider it as important as Ellis does, and leaves it out of her classification. The socio-cultural context seems to be of importance to Larsen-Freeman, while Ellis does not consider it in his classification. Although learner beliefs are separated in the Ellis classification, they are considered a factor that learners develop through the construction of knowledge and experience in both taxonomies. Larsen-Freeman considers that anxiety is a trait of personality, so she does not include it in her classification as a core factor, whereas Ellis refers to it as a core factor. Ellis includes a new factor in the taxonomies, willingness to communicate, which is considered a stable trait-like factor that is shaped by personality and intrinsic motivation. Dörnyei (2005) clarifies that '...the concept of IDs is rather loose, containing certain core variables and many optional ones' (p. 7). This can be ascertained by the way the taxonomies presented here are classified. There is not a consensus on which IDs are core factors and which are not. However, they all are considered important since they all shape language learning processes.

The classification of IDs has been relatively arbitrary, as we can see from the typologies presented above. Researchers have guided their taxonomies according to the development of research carried out in one area or another so it seems that there is no way to provide a definitive taxonomy for the study of IDs. This is understandable, as research has been developed following researchers' interests and the evolution of the ELT field. Also, it is important to keep in mind that learners are individuals who are adjusting to this rapidly changing world, and different factors will be important at some points while

others may be replaced by new ones as new research developments continue.

### **3.1.3 Individual Differences research in language learning**

All reviewers of the IDs literature agree on the development of research carried out in the area (Skehan, 1989; Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991; Larsen-Freeman, 2001; Dörnyei and Skehan, 2003; Ellis, 2004; Dörnyei, 2005). Although there has been a research shift to a focus on those differences, it seems that the approach was not the best, as stated by Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991): 'Most of the research just reviewed involves simple correlations between a simple individual variable and learner proficiency' (p. 332). In the same vein, Ellis (2004) identifies that the methodologies used in the various research studies have given rise to many criticisms because they do not seem to be measuring what they are supposed to, and there is no reference to the impact the social context places on students' learning development. In addition, there are so many instruments to measure the same factors that no comparison can be made of results, and although they can identify a relationship between variables they are not able to explain if X causes Y or Y causes X.

One of the criticisms in mainstream education was of the idea of perceiving learners as passive recipients of knowledge; IDs research has demonstrated that learners are active participants in their learning processes. Language learners' participation accounts not only for their variability in success and the time they spend to grasp the language but also for the way they approach learning. The research carried out has informed us about the various ways learners differ. Although Ellis (2004) considers that research in the area has been fragmented because '...researchers have preferred to focus their efforts

on discrete factors resulting in disparate literatures dealing with this and that ...' (p. 547), I do believe that the work carried out in the area is valuable and has been done with the goal of building up knowledge in the SLA field. However, Ellis (2004), from a positivist viewpoint, suggests that no more research should be done on isolated factors because '...the result is a lot of illumination but somewhat limited explanation' (p. 547). Nonetheless, I consider that the results obtained from research carried out over the past decades are contributing to someday developing the overarching theory Ellis is asking for, but I doubt, as mentioned above, that a concrete explanation can be reached someday because language learners are in a state of continuous development, living in a changing world and in different contexts, and are immersed in a diversity of teaching practices with an array of different aspects impacting on their learning processes.

### **3.2 The impact of humanism in education**

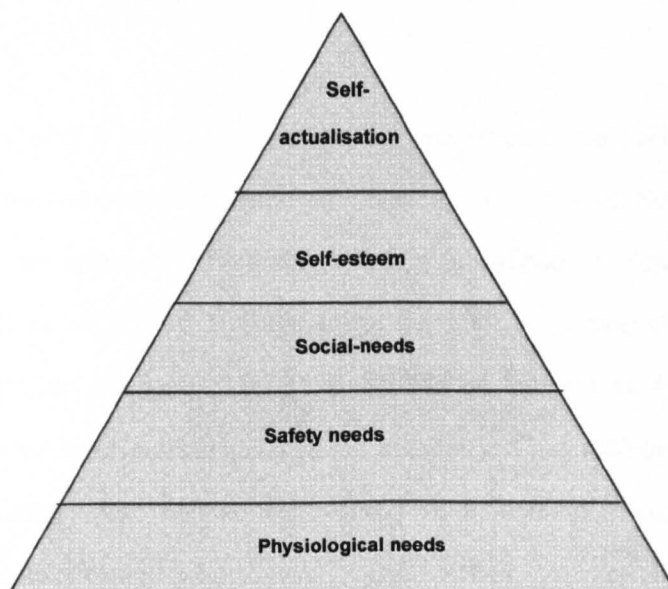
The importance and implications of IDs with regard to education in general has been in tune with the movement developed in educational psychology, i.e. with the progressive education movement in America and the United Kingdom. Progressive education emerged as a response to traditional teaching in which students were perceived as 'empty bodies' needing to be filled with knowledge. In order to understand how this movement influenced the ELT field, a review is presented. This review presents an account of the historical development of humanistic education and a discussion of the controversy arising from the inclusion of humanistic methods in ELT.

### 3.2.1 Humanistic psychology development

It can be argued that humanistic psychology grew out of a disagreement with the two main streams of psychological approaches in the 1950s: behaviourism and psychoanalysis. Behaviourism focused on the study of human minds based on observable and quantifiable actions, excluding those subjective aspects such as feelings and emotions, while psychoanalysis was focused on the study of the unconscious human mind (Williams and Burden, 1997).

Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, who are considered the main proponents of the humanistic approach, drew attention to a humanistic view of psychological problems in which human aspects, such as love, self-actualisation and freedom, among others, could be studied. Self-actualisation is the core attribute of both authors' proposals. According to Maslow and Rogers, humans' natural and intrinsic need for self-actualisation is the internal drive that moves us to continue developing to our full potential.

**Figure 3.0: Maslow's needs hierarchy**



As a result of this view of human development, Maslow (1943) formulated a motivation theory in which human needs are classified in ranked order (physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem and self-actualisation, with physiological being the most basic need, and self-actualisation the highest aspiration). According to Maslow (1943), as long as the lower level needs are covered, intrinsic human drives will make any human being attempt to fulfil the next level of need until he or she reaches the top of the needs hierarchy, which is self-actualisation.

Rogers and Freiberg (1994) took a similar view when emphasising that the development of human full potential can be achieved through freedom. In relation to his psychotherapy practice Rogers explains that:

As a psychological counsellor dealing with students and others in personal distress, I found that talking to them, giving advice, explaining the facts, and telling them what their behaviour meant did not help. But little by little I learned that if I trusted them to be essentially competent human beings, if I was truly myself with them, if I tried to understand them as they felt and perceived themselves from the inside, then a constructive process was initiated (p. 43).

The work developed in psychology by Maslow and Rogers has had a great impact on the field of education. Principles from humanistic psychology were developed into an approach to learning which was defined by Rogers and Freiberg (1994) as 'significant' or 'experiential learning'. According to Rogers and Freiberg (1994), this type of learning depends on four crucial elements: quality of personal involvement, self-initiated involvement, pervasiveness and learners' evaluation. Also defined as 'whole-person learning', Rogers and Freiberg (1994) state that:

Significant learning combines the logical and the intuitive, the intellect and the feelings, the concept and the experience, the idea and the meaning. When we learn in that way, we are whole; we use all our masculine and feminine capacities (p. 37).

In order to achieve this, Rogers proposes that teachers become facilitators who foster learning in a non-threatening environment where learners' goals are encouraged through the facilitation of learning resources and equipment to achieve the desired results. Rogers' proposal was embraced in many educational settings and has made a great contribution to education all around the world.

### **3.2.2 The development of humanistic education**

In the field of education, seeds for a humanistic approach were planted before the movement arose in the field of psychology. The work of Dewey (1897) was a basis for the later development of humanistic education. The influential philosophical ideas of Dewey fostered the progressive movement in education, which favoured experiential learning, i.e. learning by doing, and encouraged a problem-solving approach and critical thinking, as well as cooperative learning. Progressivism grew out of the disagreement of educationists with the rote memorisation prevalent in education at the time. Although not in the same era, Freire's (1996) criticism of the 'banking' model of education was in line with Dewey's ideas. Freire's work was in tune with progressivist practices and evolved from his life experience in Brazil. The principles of his educational philosophy that relate to humanistic education are his concept of critical consciousness and teacher-learner interaction. According to Freire (1996), '...the teacher-student relationship at any level, inside or outside the school, reveals its fundamentally *narrative* character' (p. 52). Learners are restricted only to listening to the narration given by teachers, although this may not be the real narration since it is changing

minute by minute. This leads students to only memorise facts and not to think critically, a feature Freire conceives as being key to liberating the creative power within each human being. Freire conceives education as a liberating force that can make humans able to see the world in its real sense and to change it in order to make it a fair place for everyone.

Freire (1996) states that 'Students, as they are increasingly posed with problems related to themselves in the world and with the world, will feel increasingly challenged and obliged to respond to that challenge' (p. 62). The need for a relationship between human beings and their environment is present in both Dewey and Freire's concepts of education. Dewey calls it a 'problem solving approach', while Freire refers to it as 'problem solving education'. Another predominant feature of their philosophies of education is that they reject the prevalent practice of seeing learners as empty minds that need to be filled with knowledge regulated by the teacher. By analysing the ideas of both educationists we can identify three emerging features as central to desirable educational practices: fostering critical thinking, a problem-solving approach and encouragement of cooperation in learning.

Humanistic education was a response to the concept of not seeing learners as beings who think and feel. According to Patterson (1973):

The goal of education, then, is to produce human, or humane, beings, whole beings, not automatons, or intellects, but thinking, feeling, living-or-acting persons, persons who can love, feel deeply, expand their inner selves, create, and who continue the process of self-education (p. 22).

Based on developments in psychology in the early 1900s, the main goal of humanistic education was to develop *self-actualising persons*. According to Patterson (1973), a self-actualising person perceives him or herself in positive

ways, has a positive self-concept, accepts him or herself and others, is spontaneous and creative, can take chances, experiment and explore, and is empathetic and compassionate. I believe that the basic premise of humanistic education is that, if we are provided with a supportive and caring environment, we will develop into happy, responsible and caring human beings who can contribute to making this world a better place. Such a supportive environment can be provided in education, according to Gage and Beliner (1992, pp. 480-485), who state that humanistic education should include the following five principles:

1. Students should choose what they should learn;
2. Schools should produce students who want to continue to learn and who know how to learn;
3. Self-evaluation is the only meaningful kind of evaluation;
4. Humanistic educators make no distinction between the cognitive and affective domains;
5. Learning is easiest, most meaningful, and most effective when it takes place in a non-threatening environment.

This approach to education was embraced by the ELT field with the introduction of the humanistic methods: the Silent Way by Gattegno (1972), Community Language Learning by Curran (1972) and Suggestopedia by Lozanov (1978) in the 1970s. In the following section an analysis of the impact of these methods in the ELT field will be presented.

### **3.3 Humanistic language teaching**

Although some authors had been encouraging the introduction of humanistic practices into the ELT field for some time, it was not until the formal introduction of the methods the Silent Way by Gattegno (1972), Community



Language Learning by Curran (1972) and Suggestopedia by Lozanov (1978) that this was formalised. In order to analyse the impact of these methods in the ELT field, I will first make a comparison of how these methods accomplished the principles identified by Gage and Beliner (1992) based on the analysis carried out by Richards and Rodgers (2001) and Larsen-Freeman (2000).

**Table 3.2: Humanistic methods' features**

Humanistic education principles	The Silent Way	Community Language Learning	Suggestopedia
Self direction	This feature is not present in the method since the teacher is the one that prescribes content and directs learners' performance, but the learners are encouraged to make guesses, try things out and arrive at the answer in their own time.	Learners decide the content of classes. Teachers guide students' language performance through modelling.	This feature is not present in this method since the teacher directs students most of the time.
Learning and learning how to learn	Students need to develop their own strategies to discover how language works since teachers are most of the time silent.	Learning is prescribed by students' communicative intentions	No reference is made to this principle. However, the methods are intended to induce an alpha state in the learners' brains, making them subconsciously more suggestible to learning.
Self-evaluation	Students develop inner criteria for self-correction since no evaluation is made by the teacher.	No evaluation procedure or approach is present in the method.	Evaluation is carried out informally through class performance.
Thinking / feeling	Feedback sessions are used to let learners express their feelings about the techniques used. Teachers use this information to plan subsequent classes.	There is an <i>appraisal</i> phase in which learners can talk about their feelings regarding their learning process.	Students' feelings are taking into account by creating a relaxed and supportive environment, making the learning affectively positive.
Non-threatening environment	Students work cooperatively	A supportive, cooperative environment is developed from the very first class.	A very relaxed environment is established from the very first session.

From this comparison made between the features of these methods with the principles of humanistic education, we can immediately identify that the three methods take a specific approach to dealing with learners' feelings, which is a

core feature of humanistic education: the personal acknowledgment of feelings, experiences, opinions and facts through the inclusion of humanistic-affective activities which promote positive self esteem, empathy and motivation. Furthermore, a warm and encouraging environment is established in these classrooms from the very beginning. However, the principle of self-initiated learning is not a strong feature of the Silent Way or Suggestopedia methods, since the syllabus is decided by teachers, and learners work with the language presented to them. However, the Community Language Learning approach gives learners complete freedom as to what language they will be working on, since sessions are based on students' language efforts in communicating among themselves. The Silent Way is based mostly on vocabulary exercises which resemble the Audiolingual method because of the correctness of utterances that is confirmed by the teachers through certain signals (since they are silent). In this way, corrections are made by the students themselves, but the confirmation of correctness is directed by the teacher. The suggestopedia literature makes no reference to the content of learning activities, but it seems that language content is provided by the teachers since they are seen as the authority figure in the classroom. A feature on which the three methods are in agreement is assessment. This is done informally and not through formal grades or marks given to learners. Students have to develop a sense of responsibility by assessing how much progress they are making and to what extent that progress is in accordance with their purposes.

Although these methods are not completely in accordance with the principles of general humanistic education, they presented a new viewpoint for the ELT profession. Some authors embraced these new methods and applied them in their classes. However, I do not believe that these methods labelled as

humanistic could have been used in their pure forms by teachers in many parts of the world at the time they were introduced, as they were so different and innovative in their approach that it would have been difficult to put them into practice. As Richards and Rodgers (2001) state:

As with other methods we have examined, there are variants both historical and individual in the actual conduct of Suggestopedia classes. Adaptations such as those we witnessed in Toronto by Jane Bancroft and her colleagues at Scarborough College, University of Toronto, showed a wide and diversified range of techniques unattested to in Lozanov's writing (pp. 104-105).

However, these practices started to be implemented by some teachers in language classrooms. The most representative supporters of this trend are Stevick (1990), Moskowitz (1978), Rinvolucri (1984) and Arnold (1999), who have dedicated most of their research and teacher and training practice to fostering more humanistic language teaching.

Moskowitz (1978) states that a concern of some educationalists was '...educating the whole person – the intellectual and the emotional dimensions' (p. 11). Humanistic education rejected the prevalent focus of educational practices in which the intellect was the aspect favoured, leaving learners' feelings aside. According to Moskowitz (1978), '...building language programs along these lines is essential in truly motivating learners and in doing justice to them as human beings and as individuals' (p. 18). We can identify in her words that the underpinning assumption of humanistic practices in ELT was that these will make students feel *motivated* through the *acknowledgement of their feelings*. However, some years later Stevick (1982) avoided defining the word humanism, as he declares: 'I don't know what it means...[it] is a word which carries with it a great deal of emotion...' (p. 7). Along the same lines, Underhill (1983) states: 'I hesitate even to mention the word as it is so

emotionally loaded and so lacking in clear definition...' (p. 131); however, he defines humanistic methodology as one that:

...aims to create an atmosphere of security which is sufficiently structured to satisfy students' emotional needs while allowing them sufficient space to grow in whatever direction suits the individual at that time (p. 131).

From these assertions, we can identify that providing learners with a secure environment in which they will not feel threatened when acknowledging their feelings, expressing their opinions and revealing personal facts will promote their inner development as well as motivating them to pursue whatever goals they choose, including their language learning goals. Although humanistic practices have been implemented by some language teachers, they have also been criticised since their introduction to the ELT profession.

### **3.3.1 Criticisms of humanistic language teaching**

The implementation of humanistic methods has been diverse, and their inclusion in ELT classrooms has been different from their original conception. Aside from this, other aspects involved in humanistic practices have raised some doubts about them. Drawing on the critical articles of (Brumfit, 1982; Stevick, 1982; Appel, 1989; Atkinson, 1989; Underhill, 1989; Gadd, 1998), I will identify the recurring criticisms of the humanistic language teaching approach in the 1990s.

The most recurring criticism of supporters of humanistic approaches was of their failure to give the term an explicit definition. Early (1982) doubted the newness of the term and suggests that '...perhaps the term... is quite simply meaningless?' (p. 5). However, humanistic teaching focuses on perceiving students as humans and attending to their affective needs. The most prevalent

feature of humanistic approaches is their attention to learners' feelings, emotions, ideas and thoughts. This leads to the criticism made concerning unbalanced practice, since teachers were prompted to put more effort into the development of learners' inner selves and not into the linguistic objectives of a language class (Gadd, 1998).

In a critique of humanistic methods, Maley (1983) equates humanistic methods with religion, since 'They have the status of *myth* rather than theory' (p. 81). At that time, humanistic authors were criticised because they were seen as sellers who wanted to make people, English teachers in this case, buy their products (humanistic methods). In spite of his strong critique of the three humanistic methods: the Silent Way by Gattegno (1972), Community Language Learning by Curran (1972) and Suggestopedia by Lozanov (1978), Maley (1983) acknowledges some positive insights derived from humanistic literature: the change in teachers' and students' roles, the importance of group supportiveness, the role of play and errors in the learning process, and the focus on the learner rather than on the teacher. Although Brumfit (1985) does not define humanism, he describes the way humanistic teachers see language:

...as something which must engage the whole person, not as something purely intellectual; they recognise that their students are people like themselves, with emotional and spiritual needs as well as intellectual ones, people who can contribute to their own learning, who are not the passive recipients of someone else's teaching; humanistic teachers believe in a world of autonomous, creative and emotionally secure people, and they believe that education can assist the process of creating such a world (p. 79).

Brumfit (1985) considers that it is not difficult to agree with these arguments; however, he believes that these objectives can be only '...a reflection of the fact that, unlike almost any other area of basic teaching, language teaching

can be entered with little or no educational training' (p. 79). According to Brumfit, lack of training was the reason why humanistic methods were embraced with such great fervour during their early years. This is a new aspect inherent to the introduction of humanistic methods since, as we will see later in the chapter, practising teachers were accused of not thinking about this new methodology when introducing any of the humanistic approaches to their day-to-day teaching practice.

Another important aspect of the criticisms related to the effusive claims about humanistic methods' benefits to the process of learning a second language without experimental support for these claims. Atkinson (1989) expresses his suspicions about this by stating that 'Some 'humanistic' writers appear to make a habit of offering extremely dogmatic, unsupported statements about learning, as if the statements were proven, monolithic truths' (p. 269). He also expresses his concern about such non-reflective practice, suggesting that a great number of teachers were implementing humanistic methods without analysis. Underhill (1989), supports this concern by stating that 'There are teachers whose practice effectively embraces humanistic values without their necessarily being aware of it' (p. 250). However, I do not believe that teachers can go into a classroom without first reviewing the activity or technique to be used and then adapting it to their particular context. Perhaps at the time these practices were proposed the ELT field was not as developed as it is today, but teachers have always had the intuition to embrace or reject a practice depending on their needs.

Appel (1989) presents an example of thoughtful practice: he embraces the new approach, but adapts it to his particular context and interweaves activities and language suitable for the purposes of his classes while connecting the

methods to the syllabus he is required to follow. He also evaluates the practices and, as perhaps a more reflective teacher than many others, especially those who only implement something without deep analysis, carries out an informal evaluation at the end. Although Gadd (1998) is a strong critic of humanistic practices in ELT, he supports the practice of what he calls pragmatic humanism, as for teachers to be able to '...respond most effectively to their students' needs they must understand their motivations, attitudes, reactions, and cognitive strengths and weaknesses – in short their psychology' (p. 233).

An important aspect that makes the humanistic approach weak in language teaching is its failure to match linguistic objectives to affective ones. In a review of different humanistic activities, Atkinson (1989) found that some linguistic objectives were not in tune with the level of students' proficiency and suggests that, 'It is surely important that we do not focus on affective factors at the expense of other and different appropriate linguistic objectives' (p. 271). This is emphasised by Richards and Rodgers (2001) who, in their review of the Suggestopedia method, identify that 'Lozanov does not articulate a theory of language, nor does it seem that he is much concerned with any particular assumptions regarding language elements and their organization' (p. 101). Along the same lines, Appel (1989), in his implementation of certain humanistic activities, says that 'I find it doubtful whether they are actually a tool for practising discrete language points, not least because authors tend to leave deliberately open which structures students choose to use in order to put their point across' (p. 264). I consider this as the most relevant criticism of humanistic practices, since the goal of any approach is effective language learning. How can this be accomplished if certain organisation is not given to the learning of the target language? This is related to the fact that humanistic

supporters concentrate more on facilitation than on teaching, and that facilitation tends to focus only on personal growth.

The impact of affective factors in language learning is something that everyone who has gone through the process of learning a language cannot deny or disagree with. For teachers, the value of attending to those affective demands, no matter what method or approach is followed, is an important aspect since, according to Bhanot (1983), '...our primary concern must be to make language teaching as effective as possible and to this extent we should look at all new developments with interest' (p. 362). Along the same lines, Rivers (1983) states that '...the humanistic approach has brought to the teacher's attention the need to include in language-learning materials vocabulary and activities for expressing one's feelings, sharing one's values and viewpoints with others...' (p. 22). Thus, we can conclude that in spite of the controversy humanistic approaches caused, they provided new insights into the ELT field which have remained valuable for language teachers. The implications of humanistic methods for the ELT field can be summarised as follows:

- Providing students with a secure environment for learning to take place;
- Balancing cognitive and affective learning to allow learners to develop equally in both dimensions;
- Taking into account learners' feelings, since they affect their learning process;
- Inclusion of affective-humanistic activities in language classes;
- Encouraging self-initiation, creativity, self-choice and self-evaluation;
- Focusing learning process on learners' needs rather than teaching ones;



- The acknowledgement of feelings in learning enhances learners' self-esteem and motivation and consequently, learning is enjoyable;
- The development of this motivational force in language classes will make learners continue their own development in other areas of their lives.

There is no doubt that for any learning to be effective, a balance between cognitive and affective aspects should be established. The introduction of humanistic approaches in the ELT field led to a recognition of the determinant role affective factors play in the success of learning a foreign language, thus the impact on the field can be seen in: the change of the focus of attention from the teacher to the learner; the attention to learning styles and strategies; the promotion of learner responsibility; the encouragement of learner autonomy; the development of an environment conducive to learning through the bonding of groups; the encouragement of real communication within the class; and the stimulation of learners' involvement in their learning process (Sinclair, 2006). Since the introduction of humanistic practices, these have gone through a process of adjustment in day-to-day teaching practice. Today, these practices, as Kerr (2007) puts it, '...have shown a marked shift away from a Rogerian-humanist kind of humanising, towards a looser, more general interpretation of the word' (p. 6).

### **3.3.2 Countering criticisms of humanistic education with tough love, eustress and dynamic disequilibrium**

Being a humanistic teacher has a wide range of meanings for teachers. The most common meaning attached to humanism is the concept of care. Teachers' conceptions of care have been found to be underdeveloped and

limited (Goldstein and Lake, 2000). An example of how a misconception of the term can lead novice teachers to ineffective teaching is exemplified by Wenstein (1998). She reports how Mollie, a student teacher being observed by Wenstein, operationalised the term 'care' as 'never say no', leading to 'a situation so chaotic and so confused that no learning, teaching or caring was possible' (p.153). Exercising such kinds of practices can lead to chaos or 'to a culture of self-indulgence...enabled by the failure of professors to maintain expectations in the classrooms' (Benton, 2006, p.1). In order to really help students' development, classroom environments should provide an emotionally secure space for them to tackle academic challenges, which can genuinely help them acquire the abilities and skills needed for their future personal and professional lives. As stated by Fram and Pearse (2000), 'students are in the university to learn, and learning can sometimes be painful' (p.42). It is at these painful moments when the need for an emotionally secure space is a must. As Hargreaves (2000) suggests, '...attending to students' emotional lives is necessary to provide a safe, orderly and supportive climate in which cognitive and academic learning can take place.' (p. 11).

The key tenet of humanistic education is the development of self-actualising persons. As previously explained, this is achieved when learners can take chances, experiment and explore in a supportive environment, among other things. Thus, meaningful learning occurs when students are able to take an active role in taking risks, but this process is frequently accompanied or impelled by discomfort' (Thelen, 1960 cited in Joyce, 1984). Joyce (1984) states that 'to grow, learners have to acknowledge discomfort and set tasks to help break the barriers of fear' (p. 26). Thus, it is important not to create a learning environment so comfortable that students feel no need to move out of their comfort zones; on the contrary, emphasis should be placed on providing

stimulating learning opportunities that can challenge students in order to help them develop. Teachers need to create a 'dynamic disequilibrium' (Joyce, 1984), so students can be invited to expand their skills. Change is a constant in human life, so if we as teachers really want to help our students' development as whole persons, we need to help them embrace new learning experiences in spite of the negative feelings these may arouse, and support the emotional aspects inherent in such experiences and feelings. Teachers need to be assertive through the use of explicitly stated expectations for appropriate student behaviour and academic growth.

New learning experiences will be dominated by diverse emotions such as anxiety, fear and insecurity, so a space should be given for students to acknowledge these emotions in a supportive way in order for them to try new things. The diversity of feelings engendered in school environments can make students feel stressed. According to Selye (1976), 'stress is the nonspecific response of the body to any demand' (p. 53). Selye subdivides stress into eustress (pleasant stress) and distress (unpleasant stress). Brain research suggests that an appropriate balance between stress and comfort is a must for learning to occur (Lackney, 2002). Stress is positive (eustress) when sustained for a short period of time, due to the chemicals released by human bodies, whereas negative stress (distress), caused by intimidation, embarrassment or fear of rejection, makes the brain misinterpret clues from the environment and resort to familiar behaviour (Jensen, 2008 cited in Degan, 2011). This suggests that eustress is a necessary component to facilitate learning, but it needs to be properly supported so learning can be achieved. As stated by Selye (1976):

*We must not suppress stress in all its forms, but diminish distress and facilitate eustress, the satisfactory feeling that comes from the accomplishment of tasks we consider worth while (p.56).*

The types of reactions caused by stress have been classified into emotional, cognitive, behavioural and physiological (Misra et al., 2000). Diverse academic sources of stress can either make students experience eustress or distress (Gibbons et al., 2007). Distress has been found to significantly correlate to poor academic performance (Bennett, 2003). It has been suggested that increasing learners' self-esteem can help their ability to cope with distress (Abouserie, 1994). This has been confirmed by a stress-reduction programme focused, among other aspects, on building self-confidence which helps students to enhance their strategies for coping with stress (Brown and Ralph, 1999). This suggests that no matter what sources of stress may affect learners, their impact can be mediated by learners' skills to face such sources of stress. It is paramount, then, to support students through positive interventions that can help them to build their self-esteem and enhance their interpersonal skills and coping strategies for stress. Group work has been found to offer valuable opportunities for learners' self-development and growth (Cartney and Rouse, 2006). Students who are more skilful in making use of social support and who have a positive attitude towards academic activities have been found to cope successfully with distress (Gibbons et al., 2007). Thus, creating positive learning environments in which teachers connect empathically and genuinely with learners will no doubt result in powerful motivational forces. The importance of these interpersonal aspects was demonstrated in a study of stress and eustress in nursing students, in which effective teachers were those who '...were more tuned into students' concerns, showed more empathy and gave more guidance...' (Gibbons et al., 2007, p. 289).

In order to cater for students' emotional and academic growth, humanistic practices should be exercised, but these practices should be carried out

'...critically and not sentimentally or self-indulgently' (Hargreaves, 2000b, p.813). Thus, creating positive interventions in which students and teachers can develop close relationships and acknowledge each other's feelings is necessary in order to create an effective environment in which a difference to learning processes can be made. Since the purpose of education is to expand learners' capabilities, it is necessary to help them stretch their skills in a supportive manner. As Hargreaves and Tucker (1991) state:

*When the purposes of care are balanced with those of group management and instructional effectiveness, and when care is construed in social and moral terms as well as interpersonal ones, its contribution to quality in education can be exceptionally valuable (p. 497).*

Humanistic education conceives learning as an emotionally-driven process and motivation is considered the variable that '...has a very important role in determining success or failure in any learning situation' (Dörnyei, 2001a, p. 2). In this case, how do our feelings and emotions connect with our foreign language learning motivation? Is this connection positive or negative? The interrelationship of these two variables is explored in the following sections.

### **3.4 Motivational psychology theories**

Although affect has always been a pervasive component of motivation, it has been eclipsed in motivation research because of the interest in cognition (Meyer and Turner, 2006). However, its importance is starting to gain ground in different learning aspects such as well-being (Hascher 2007, 2008), learning processes (Järvenova and Järvelä, 2005) and achievement (Pekrun et al., 2002).

An influential theory developed in mainstream psychology which has influenced ELT is that of Deci and Ryan (1985), which distinguishes between

extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Under this distinction, learners who are extrinsically motivated (by obtaining rewards such as grades or prizes) depend on their performance, since this will regulate those external rewards that make their motivation increase or decrease. Conversely, learners who are intrinsically motivated (learning because the task gives the learner a sense of identity and pleasure) can regulate their behaviour and attitudes towards the language learning situation in general. Due to its external component, which is not regulated by the learner but by some other agent, extrinsic motivation is considered not to be favourable for language learning, whereas intrinsic motivation is considered the most reliable type of motivation that makes learners successful because of its total dependence on the self.

Due to the complexity of the motivation construct it has been difficult to reach a comprehensive theory (Dörnyei, 2001a). Different motivational approaches have been developed in order to try to come up with a better understanding of the concept. Thus, it would not be possible to present an overview of all of them in this literature review. Due to the scope of the topic at hand, four motivational psychology theories have been selected as those informing the interpretation of this study's results, as follows: self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997), attribution theory (Weiner, 1992), self-worth theory (Covington, 1998) and self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985). In the following section, a brief overview of these is presented.

### **3.4.1 Self-efficacy theory**

According to Bandura (1994), self-efficacy refers to '...people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives' (p. 71). These beliefs are the ones

that shape how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. According to this theory, people with a high level of self-efficacy engage in tasks with the conviction that they possess the capabilities needed to succeed in them. In contrast, a person with a low level of self-efficacy avoids difficult tasks and resorts to their personal weaknesses to justify their lack of effort to pursue certain goals.

Bandura (1977) stated that '...efficacy expectations determine how much effort people will expend and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles and aversive experiences' (p. 194). These efficacy expectations are composed of three dimensions: magnitude, generality and strength, and are influenced by four sources: our past experiences (*mastery experiences*); those provided by people around us (*vicarious experiences*); encouragement from significant others (*social persuasion*); and the influence of our emotional and physiological states (*somatic and emotional states*).

Self-efficacy beliefs affect human activity cognitively, affectively, motivationally and socially. People tend to plan what to do and how to achieve their goals, so this planning is shaped by the beliefs people have about their abilities to achieve such goals. In the same way, motivation is affected by these beliefs, since people will act to pursue certain goals according to the ability beliefs they have about them. Furthermore, these self-efficacy beliefs determine the social groups people join, since people tend to avoid activities that they consider above their abilities. Thus, a person's life course is determined by the abilities they believe they possess. Self-efficacy beliefs influence people affectively because, as a result of their ability assessment, some people are more prone to suffering from depression or anxiety when involved in a challenging or threatening situation.

### **3.4.2 Attribution theory**

This theory assumes that human motivation is a result of the need to know the reason why something has happened. Thus, causal attributions of a phenomenon can be given to a person or to environmental factors. If a student, for example, has had very bad learning experiences which he or she attributes to his or her capacities, he or she will not be willing to participate in any learning activity again because he or she considers that the cause of failure is something he or she cannot change (his or her cognitive ability); however, if a learner considers that the reason for failure is that he or she did not make his or her best effort, then he or she will go into a new learning situation with the disposition to make his or her best effort so he or she can have better results this time.

According to Weiner (1980), 'The most salient causal inferences are ability and effort, but many other factors are also influential' (p. 393). Weiner also identifies three properties for these causes: stability, locus and controllability. Thus the causes to which we attribute success or failure can be stable or unstable (in this case, the assumption is that the results we obtain in certain activities will vary); causes can also be internal or external (attributable to our personal features or to external forces); and finally, causes can be controllable or uncontrollable (this refers to the power we have to control or not control certain factors to make them work to our benefit). Furthermore, according to Weiner (1980, pp. 329-332) the four types of inferences about the self that play a central role in motivation are: ability, effort, task and luck antecedents.

**Ability antecedents** these are the subjective assessments of our past experiences results.



**Effort antecedents** these are those evaluations we made about the effort we make to do certain activities and the outcomes obtained.

**Task antecedents** these inferences refer to the subjective assessments we make about the tasks we perform.

**Luck antecedents** these refer to the attribution we make than an outcome is just a matter of luck and has nothing to do with our personal characteristics.

According to Weiner (1980):

To reach causal inferences, that is, to decide why one succeeds or fails, requires that various sources of information be utilized and combined. Some of this information will originate from the current situation, while other evidence is gleaned from memories of past events (p. 329).

This attribution awareness process between current and past events is what makes people continue or not continue engaging in diverse actions. Thus, motivation is shaped by the outcomes of past events through awareness of causes of the success or failure of past events. This attribution awareness is what moves us to pursue a specific course of action for new or future activities, or to stop doing certain things because we consider we don't have the capacity to do them. It is important to note that these attributions are subjective, as we reach them through experience and reflection between past and current events. I consider that this attribution awareness is also linked to our beliefs, since if we believe that someone or something is the cause of our failure or success in language learning (e.g. the teacher, the class activities, the programme focus) our motivational intelligence will provide us with the steps needed to overcome those barriers and continue trying if we believe the cause is not ourselves but some external factors that have impeded us from succeeding. These personal assumptions are the determinant factors that promote action or lack of it, and the actions we take are sometimes directed by

the need to protect our self-image from others, which is definitely an affective need.

### **3.4.3 Self-worth theory**

According to Covington (1992), self-worth theory ‘...assumes that the search for self-acceptance is the highest human priority, and that in schools self-acceptance comes to depend on one’s ability to achieve competitively’ (p. 74). Thus, in schools learners are considered as worthy as their abilities to achieve educational goals imposed by schools and teachers. Due to this, students’ value is only measured through school achievement. This being the case, in school achievement, the centre of students’ life, different actions are performed in order to protect students’ self-image. Ability equals worth in schools, and it is this premise that makes students develop strategies to protect themselves from the appraisal of their ability by their peers. Thus, according to Covington (1992), there are two kinds of strategies: self-handicapping strategies and techniques to guarantee success.

#### **3.4.3.1 Self-handicapping strategies**

These kinds of strategies include the establishment of excuses that prevent learners from achieving the desired goals (e.g. drugs, alcohol and sometimes imaginary diseases). Among these strategies, Covington (1984) identifies four performed frequently by students to protect their self-image in schools:

1. *Procrastination*. This is the habit of leaving things for tomorrow, but things are never done or are done at the last minute. This avoidance of doing things allows learners to protect their self-image, since their ability is not assessed because their failure is assigned to not doing

school-work or to doing things at the last minute, meaning that due to the shortness of time their failure is understandable and justified.

2. *Unattainable goals.* Another way learners protect themselves is through the habit of pursuing goals that are beyond their abilities so that failure can be foreseen and justified as not due to low ability but to the difficulty inherent to that goal.
3. *Underachievers.* These are students who just refuse to try so that their ability cannot be assessed.
4. *The academic wooden leg.* This strategy includes the assignation of one's low performance in a test or activity to a personal weakness (e.g. anxiety).

These strategies encompass diverse justifications students are willing to make up in order to protect their self-worth and not lose face among their peers. However, these students' greatest fear is finding out that they are not able, since this means they are not worthy.

#### **3.4.3.2 Techniques designed to guarantee success**

These techniques are developed by students in order to maintain their self-worth through always succeeding. These are: overstriving, low-goal setting and academic cheating. These strategies utilised by students have as their primary goal the protection of self-worth at all costs in order to fulfil students' affective requirements of being accepted and loved by others.

#### **3.4.4 Self-determination theory**

According to Ryan and Deci (2000), self-determination theory focuses on '...investigating people's inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs that are the basis for their self-motivation and personality integration' (p. 68). They consider that the construct of motivation lies in a continuum of self-determination that goes from amotivation (lack of motivation) through external, introjected, identified and integrated regulation (externally regulated) to intrinsic motivation (intrinsically regulated).

Ryan and Deci's (2000) final type of motivation on the continuum, ***intrinsic motivation***, is '...the inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacities, to explore, and to learn' (p. 70). In order for this type of innate motivation to be maintained Ryan and Deci identify three conditions that need to be present: competence, relatedness and autonomy. Thus, it is not only that people need to feel competent in the different actions they perform throughout their lifetime, but they also need to feel that these actions are self-initiated in a supportive environment. Relatedness refers to the need people have to be accepted, respected and connected to significant others in their social environment. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), the social environment in which people develop is a crucial determinant of the enhancement or diminishment of intrinsic motivation. The absence of a supportive environment in which this type of motivation can be promoted results in passive and alienated people who can develop unhealthy behaviours.

The four theories presented above conceive affectivity as the core of motivation behaviour. Learners' behaviour is determined by the need to protect their self-image and to preserve their self-worth, and is influenced by

significant others and the socio-cultural context in which they live. Thus, motivation is powerfully influenced not only by learners' personalities but also by personal experiences, cognitive processes and the social context. All of these imply an array of emotions and feelings aroused in intra- and interpersonal interactions. A complex interaction of numerous student and situational characteristics determines foreign language learners' motivation. Given that language learning is a socially constructed process, the diversity of emotions experienced is a crucial aspect impacting on the motivational behaviour displayed by foreign language learners.

### 3.5 Motivation theories in foreign language learning

Motivation is defined by Williams and Burden (1997) as:

A state of cognitive and emotional arousal, which leads to a conscious decision to act, and which gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort in order to attain a previously set goals (or goals) (p. 120).

This implies that cognition and affect interplay, and this two-domain interplay is what makes motivation to be a ***not stable state***. McDonough (2007) argues that motivation in language learning includes four components: 'the reasons why we want to learn, the strength of our desire to learn, the kind of person we are, and the task, and our estimation of what it requires of us' (p. 369). Ellis (2004) argues that motivation is more an *affective* than a *cognitive* factor. I agree with Ellis, since our motivation varies in relation to our personal desires, the experiences we encounter in a given situation, and the people with whom we are in contact during those experiences; however, I also consider that cognitive processes during demotivated stages in learning are what make learners 'get up' and continue trying. As there are so many and varied aspects that shape motivation it has been difficult to get to a clear picture of the term in

the ELT field. Dörnyei and Skehan (2003) attribute to the range of factors that can influence learners' motivation the different models of motivation that have emerged in the past decades.

The powerful force our emotions play in language learning motivation is reflected in early motivational studies, in which positive feelings towards the target language community (integrative orientation) or the instrumentality of language (instrumental orientation) were seen as strong determinants of success (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). However, most of the research done has concentrated on establishing relations between motivation and language proficiency. Thus, motivation has been researched as if it were static and not a dynamic process developing or not due to the influence of diverse factors (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998).

Motivation studies in second language learning started with the work of Gardner and Lambert (1972) in Canada. Their series of studies allowed them to construct a socio-psychological theory of second language learning. According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), this theory '...maintains that the successful learner of a second language must be psychologically prepared to adopt various aspects of behaviour which characterize members of another linguistic-cultural group' (p. 3). Thus, they considered attitude the strongest influence of motivation as well as learners' orientation in learning a second or foreign language. In their studies, 'It was orientation that apparently provided a strong motivation to learn the other group's language. In the Montreal setting, students with an integrative orientation were more successful in second language learning than those who were instrumentally oriented' (p. 4). It is because of this particular context that the integrative orientation emerged as

the most relevant to learning success, since it was shaped by the desire to integrate into the community.

According to Gardner (1985), motivation is a compound of three elements: motivational intensity, desire to learn the language, and attitudes towards learning the language. Gardner developed the social psychological approach to motivation in language learning in which attitudes of learners towards the target language community have the most powerful effects on learning outcomes. His motivation theory identifies that learners can have two kinds of orientations for learning a second language:

1. *Integrative orientation*. This refers to those positive feelings towards the target language community which lead language learners to interact with and adopt similar attitudes to those of members of that community.
2. *Instrumental orientation*. This refers to the instrumental value learners give to the target language, such as getting a career change or an increment in salary.

In Gardner's motivation theory (1985), he conceptualised an integrative motive which is defined as 'motivation to learn a second language because of positive feelings toward the community that speaks that language' (pp. 82-83). This integrative motive has been the one that has attracted the attention of research carried out in the past decades. This motive is composed of three components: (a) integrativeness (encompassing the integrative orientation towards the target language and positive attitudes towards the community); (b) attitudes towards the learning situation (encompassing attitudes towards

the teacher and the learning situation); and (c) motivation (which includes intensity, desire and attitudes towards learning a foreign or second language).

In the early studies conducted by Gardner and colleagues, the integrative orientation emerged as a determinant factor for the success of language learning. Due to the context in which these studies were carried out, Canada, it is possible to understand those results. However, learners in different settings may not be so strongly integratively motivated but may have a high instrumental motivation and thus achieve good levels of proficiency. Later studies demonstrated that the classification was narrow and that learners may differ among a wide range of motivational orientations, and many may not have just one (Noels et al., 2000), especially if we focus on learning a language in an EFL context in which learners are not learning English with the purpose of integrating into the culture of an English-speaking country, and some may not even have any motivation at all (e.g. children learning because of parents' desires).

The late 1990s witnessed a shift in the L2 motivation research agenda since the developmental stages of motivation attracted the attention of scholars. The first attempt to conceptualise motivation as an evolving process was the process-oriented model of L2 motivation (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998). This model later became the basis for Dörnyei's motivational strategies proposal (Dörnyei, 2001a), which suggests different motivational teaching techniques for each stage of his process-oriented model. These two proposals by Dörnyei are relevant to my research purpose since they conceive motivation as dynamic and evolving over a period of time. Thus, these proposals provide a useful basis to analyse the participants' emotional experiences during the study and the effects these have on participants' motivation.



Besides these two proposals, a recent proposal is the L2 motivational self system (Dörnyei, 2005), a broad construct of L2 motivation compatible with findings of past research in the field of L2 motivation. This is relevant to my study because of its focus on the self. Thus, these three theories are reviewed in the following section.

### **3.5.1 The process-oriented model of L2 motivation**

Drawing on Action Control theory (Heckhausen and Kuhl, 1985), Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) developed the process-oriented model of L2 motivation to emphasise the dynamic nature of language learning motivation as well as its temporal axis. According to Dörnyei and Ottó (1998), a process-oriented approach can include diverse research trends, explain the motivation fluctuation of learners over time and help in the implementation of strategies to motivate language learners. Thus, this model later evolved into motivational strategies for teachers to develop intrinsic motivation in classrooms (Dörnyei, 2001a).

The process-oriented model of L2 motivation was created with two objectives: to emphasise the process-oriented perspective of motivation that had been eclipsed because of the product-oriented approach dominating L2 motivation research at the time; and to integrate the most important motivational research conceptualisations in educational psychology and L2 motivation in one framework (Dörnyei, 2001b). The process-oriented model is composed of two dimensions:

#### **1. Action Sequence**

This dimension represents the behavioural process by which motivational wishes or desires are converted into goals and later into specific actions in order to achieve those objectives.

## **2. Motivational Influences**

This dimension represents all those factors that influence the motivational process in learners.

### **3.5.1.1 Action sequence dimension**

This dimension comprises three stages that start with the 'preactional stage' in which the decision to carry out certain activities is generated; after the decision is taken comes the 'actional stage', in which learners perform certain actions that fuel motivation. The 'postactional stage' is an evaluation of the different actions performed in relation to the action done.

#### **Preactional stage**

This stage refers to the initial phase when an individual formalises a desire into a goal and where the intention to achieve that goal is formalised through specific actions when the necessary means and resources are available. The preactional stage is composed of three sub-processes: goal setting, intention formation and the initiation of intention enactment.

- Goal setting

During this stage an individual's desires, wishes and opportunities may evolve into an intention to act and later into an action plan so the intention can crystallise into a reality. However, having a goal is not enough for an individual to initiate action: commitment and action plans are also necessary for energising action. During this sub-process the goals of language learners may be influenced by their subjective values, expectations from significant others, learner beliefs, obstacles or perceived consequences for not acting, among others.

- Intention formation

After an individual has transformed a desire or wish into a goal and commitment has been added to the desire, an action plan should include not only guidelines or subtasks that need to be completed in order to achieve the goal but also temporal specifications as to when these have to be done. It is at this point when an intention is formed. During this sub-process the intention formation of language learners may be influenced by the sense of self-determination, teachers' and parents' influence, classroom goal structure, and the classroom climate, among others.

- The initiation of intention enactment

After an intention has been formed, a learner needs to have the means and resources available to transform the intention into specific actions. During this sub-process the initiation of intention enactment may be influenced by attributional factors, self-confidence, self-efficacy, self-competence, self-worth and feedback from the teacher.

### **Actional stage**

This stage represents the different actions learners have decided to do in order to obtain a desired goal. It is at this stage that learners make continuous appraisals of the process and also need to protect and maintain their motivation. At this stage some learners decide to continue or cancel their actions (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998). The actional stage is composed of three sub-processes: appraisal, generation of subtasks and implementation and action control.

- Subtask generation and implementation

As mentioned above, in order for an intention to crystallise into action, an action plan needs to be generated. The implementation of the tasks included in the action plan derives subtasks. According to Dörnyei and Ottó (1998),

'...the quality of subtask generation and the accompanying setting of sub goals is one of the principal indicators of effective learning' (p. 50).

- **Appraisal**

This represents the continuous appraisal learners make of the different aspects of the learning environment and the progress obtained in relation to the accomplishment of the action. The appraisal stage is influenced by multiple factors such as the learning environment, the school curriculum and the course, among others.

- **Action control**

This stage represents those processes learners engage in to maintain and protect their motivation. Self regulatory strategies (i.e. action maintenance, language learning and goal setting strategies) are used by students to redirect their attention and concentration from those distractions that can prevent them from completing the actions they have set.

### **Postactional stage**

This is the final stage of the model which corresponds to motivational retrospection. After an action has been completed, a critical evaluation of the process is carried out by the learner. It is during this retrospection that learners form causal attributions about the learning experience and explore new directions for future actions. Thus, the postactional motivation process evolves into a preactional stage and a new cycle begins. According to Dörnyei (2001a), 'The way students process their past experiences in this retrospective phase will determine the kind of activities they will be motivated to pursue in the future' (p. 21). The postactional stage is said to be mostly influenced by factors related to attribution theory (section 3.4.2). and self-concept beliefs (Dörnyei, 2001b).

3.5.1.2        Motivational influences

Each stage of the model is influenced by a variety of factors that represent the motivational influences that account for the variability of motivational behaviour learners may display. It is this component of the model that can enclose different motivational theories in the motivational process of learners. Table 3.3 presents some of the possible motivational influences outlined by Dörnyei (2001a).

Table 3.3: Motivational influences on the L2 process-oriented model

<b>Preactional stage</b> <i>(choice motivation)</i>	<b>Actional stage</b> <i>(executive motivation)</i>	<b>Postactional stage</b> <i>(motivational retrospection)</i>
<u>Phase sub-processes:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Setting goals</li><li>• Forming intentions</li><li>• Launching action</li></ul>	<u>Phase sub-processes:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Generating and carrying out subtasks</li><li>• Ongoing appraisal (of one's achievements)</li><li>• Action control mechanisms (self-regulation)</li></ul>	<u>Phase sub-processes:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Forming causal attributions</li><li>• Elaborating standards and strategies</li><li>• Dismissing intention and further planning</li></ul>
<b>Motivational influences</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Subjective values related to language learning</li><li>▪ Intrinsic and extrinsic values associated with language learning</li><li>▪ Expectations from significant others</li><li>▪ Expectancy of success</li><li>▪ Learner beliefs</li><li>▪ Learning strategies</li><li>▪ Distractions and obstacles</li><li>▪ Perceived consequences for not acting</li></ul>	<b>Motivational influences</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Quality of the learning experience (novelty, coping potential, self and social image)</li><li>▪ Sense of self-determination / autonomy</li><li>▪ Teachers' and parents' influence</li><li>▪ Classroom goal structure (competitive, cooperative)</li><li>▪ Learner groups dynamics (cohesiveness, peer role modelling)</li><li>▪ Classroom climate</li><li>▪ Knowledge and use of self-regulatory strategies</li></ul>	<b>Motivational influences</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Attributional factors</li><li>▪ Self-concept beliefs (self-confidence/ self-efficacy/ self-competence and self-worth)</li><li>▪ Feedback from the teacher</li></ul>

### **3.5.2 Motivational strategies proposal**

The lack of applicability of the outcomes of research on motivation in the past decades led Dörnyei (2001a) to develop a framework of motivational strategies for teachers to use in order to develop learners' intrinsic motivation.

His process-oriented proposal is divided into four main stages:

#### **1. Creating the basic motivational conditions**

- Appropriate teacher behaviours
- A pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the classroom
- A cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms

#### **2. Generating initial motivation**

- Enhancing the learners' L2 related values and attitudes
- Increasing the learners' expectancy of success
- Increasing the learners' goal-orientedness
- Making the teaching materials relevant for the learners
- Creating realistic learner beliefs

#### **3. Maintaining and protecting motivation**

- Making learning stimulating and enjoyable
- Presenting tasks in a motivating way
- Setting specific learner goals
- Protecting the learners' self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence
- Allowing learners to maintain a positive social image
- Creating learner autonomy
- Promoting self-motivating strategies
- Promoting cooperation among learners

#### **4. Encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation**

- Promoting motivational attributions
- Providing motivational feedback
- Increasing learner satisfaction
- Offering rewards and grades in a motivating manner

This proposal implies that although learners may not come motivated to classrooms there are certain areas teachers need to work on in order to

develop learners' intrinsic motivation. It is important to emphasise that the first stage of this process-oriented cycle to develop intrinsic motivation is in tune with one of the objectives of humanistic education: providing learners with a non-threatening environment in which learning can be achieved. According to Dörnyei (2001a), 'Motivational strategies cannot be employed successfully in a 'motivation vacuum' – certain preconditions must be in place before any further attempts to generate motivation can be effective' (p. 31). These three conditions are: appropriate teacher behaviours and a good relationship with the students; a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere; and a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms. Humanistic education acknowledges the importance of making students feel valued, encourages cooperation among learners and emphasises the importance of creating a non-threatening environment in which learning is facilitated. We can find these principles embedded in the conditions Dörnyei (2001a) considers to be the core attributes for the development of intrinsic motivation in language learners. An important aspect to consider when implementing any strategy to intrinsically motivate students is the culture and context where the techniques are going to be applied, since studies have reported that intrinsic motivation development varies across cultures (Iyengar and Lepper, 1999). Thus again the complexity of reaching a comprehensive theory of motivation is evident, since what may be relevant to certain groups may not be applicable to others.

Due to its classroom-based conception, this proposal is relevant for my study's purpose because it can provide insights into the causes of emotions experienced by participants during classroom instruction and how these affect their motivation in daily classes.

### **3.5.3 The L2 motivational self system**

The search for understanding learners' individual differences and motivational behaviour led Dörnyei (2005) to conceive the L2 motivational self system. The concept of 'possible selves' was first developed by Markus and Nurius (1986), and it is distinguished into three main types: (1) 'ideal selves that we would very much like to become', (2) 'selves that we could become', and (3) 'selves we are afraid of becoming'. The key tenet of 'possible selves' is the powerful motivational function of imagination. According to Dörnyei (2009), having a vision or image of what you want to become can be a secret tool that helps language learners not to diverge from their goals to become successful.

The L2 motivational self system encompasses three dimensions:

#### **1. The Ideal L2 self**

This is the self L2 learners would like to become.

#### **2. The Ought to L2 Self**

This is the self learners have to become in order to comply with obligations and expectancies of significant others.

#### **3. The L2 learning experience**

This refers to the immediate experiences learners are facing in their language learning process.

The L2 motivational system is based on the emotional experience of learning a second or foreign language, but its scope is broader than Gardner's integrative orientation. The Ideal L2 self and Ought to self represent the constant emotional appraisals learners make of themselves in relation to the learning experiences they are facing and future outcomes or desired results. Self visualisations play a core role in the L2 motivational system, since the images learners conceive of themselves are the link sustaining their motivation (Dörnyei, 2005).



The Ideal L2 self can enhance motivation by encouraging students to take specific steps in order to be able to become that self they see in their visualisations. Thus, learners may be more prompt to focus their efforts and take specific steps, such as devoting more time to practice so they can become their ideal self. However, I believe that the Ideal L2 self can also be a negative pressure on those learners at the first stages of the learning process who see their Ideal L2 self to be far from their real self. Learners' beliefs play a crucial role in learners' Ideal L2 self because for an ideal self to become achievable, learners need to believe that it is possible for them to become their ideal self. Thus, learners' evaluations of themselves as language learners need to be somehow positive for the ideal L2 self visualisations to be effective motivators (Dörnyei, 2009).

The Ought to self dimension refers to the external influences on learners because of the expectations significant others may have of them. According to Dörnyei (2009), this dimension '...does not lend itself to obvious motivational practices' (p. 32). However, I believe that in some cultures this dimension may be a stronger motivational enhancer than the Ideal L2 self.

The L2 learning experience dimension derives from the diverse situations learners face during their learning processes. Thus, factors such as the teacher, peers, learning materials and successful completion of tasks influence the motivational behaviour learners display in classrooms.

The first two dimensions of the system are directed towards the future expectations learners may have of themselves and of those expectations placed on them by significant others. The learning experience, on the other

hand, is more concerned with past and present evaluations of the L2 experience and its effects on learners' motivation.

The three proposals presented above emphasise the emotional and temporal components of L2 motivation. Thus, the need to deepen our understanding of emotions experienced by language learners across contexts is highlighted in the following overview of studies in this area.

### **3.6 Emotions in foreign language learning and their connection to motivation**

Although affect has been recognised as having a crucial role in foreign language learning (Ellis, 1994; Arnold and Brown, 1999), the investigation of emotions has not been at the forefront of the research agenda in the ELT field (Dewaele, 2005; Garret and Young, 2009). Cognition has been emphasised in ELT research in spite of the interplay that both dimensions have on learning (Arnold, 1999). However, there are numerous scholars who have acknowledged that foreign language learning is emotionally driven (MacIntyre, 2002; Dörnyei, 2005; Aki, 2006; Arnold, 2007; Garret and Young, 2009; Bown and White, 2010; Imai, 2010). Attention to emotions can help overcome problems of demotivation created by fear or anger which can risk foreign language learners' potential. In addition, trying to evoke emotions that enhance learners' self-esteem and promote empathy can contribute to reenergising students' motivational energy and facilitating language learning.

As already mentioned, the construct of affect '...is essentially diffuse and conceptually difficult to define' (Do and Schallert, 2004, p. 619). However, integral components of affect are emotions, feelings and moods. The first two terms are included in education literature interchangeably (Scherer, 2005),

and are considered close in meaning (Efklides and Volet, 2005). Ekman (2003) acknowledges that emotions and moods involve feelings, meaning that feelings are a component of both and this may be the reason that a definite separation of them has not been possible in the literature. Along the same lines, Prinz (2005) states that emotions are feelings and both terms refer to perceptions of bodily changes: when these perceptions are conscious they are *feelings*, whereas when they are not conscious they are *emotions*. However, the role of bodily feelings in the experience of an emotion remains an open question, since there are no conclusions from the research that has been done in this area (Barret et al., 2007).

The close interrelationship between emotions and feelings makes it very difficult to separate the two concepts. However, moods seem to be more likely to be distinguished from emotions since the latter can be traced as reactions to particular events, whereas mood changes sometimes may not be attributable to a specific reason (Ekman, 2003). Emotions are said to be context-dependent, short-lived and subjective responses to a specific situation, object or person (Do and Schallert, 2004; Sansone and Thoman, 2005; Hascher, 2008). Mood changes, on the other hand, may not be attributable to a specific situation, have a longer effect and are very ambiguous (Ekman, 2003; Do and Schallert, 2004; Scherer, 2005). According to Efklides and Petkaki (2005), '...there is consensus that positive mood promotes more inclusive forms of thinking that permit the person to be more creative and willing to take risks' (p. 416). Conversely, negative mood provokes the opposite. Mood seems to shape students' perceptions regarding the difficulty of an activity or task. However, as previously mentioned, mood can last for hours or even days and cannot always be attributable to a specific

situation, thus it may not be originated by classroom instruction but by some other reason which is beyond the learning environment space.

Emotions are said to control some of our mental processes (Schumann, 1998), so the combination of emotional experiences with the diverse external factors learners are exposed to in any learning situation has a strong influence on learning outcomes. Although emotions can be labelled as being positive or negative, emotions *per se* are not detrimental or beneficial for learning processes (Pekrun et al., 2002; Imai, 2010). Emotions are individually experienced; a single situation can evoke different emotional reactions in learners. Thus, the relevance of emotions to learners' motivational behaviour is going to be determined by the convergence of IDs, emotional events and the socio-cultural factors of the context in which learning takes place. The interplay of all these will result in very different emotional reactions among learners that will modify their motivational energy. Thus, emotions continuously regulate the motivational energy foreign language learners display in classrooms, and the outcomes of positive and negative emotions can be either beneficial or detrimental for their learning processes.

Emotions are embedded in the particular situation that causes them. In language classrooms emotions might be caused because of interaction with the teacher, with peers or with learning materials, or they may be a reaction to students' own feelings (Sansone and Thoman, 2005; Scherer, 2005; Hascher, 2008). Emotions can also result in particular motivational behaviours from students: to continue trying to solve a particular learning task, or to stop trying because of a negative emotion (Scherer, 2005). Emotions may vary in the intensity of the feelings being experienced, and this intensity variation might explain students' individual appraisal and their subsequent actions

(Scherer, 2005; Hascher, 2007, 2008). Barret et al. (2007) state that '...an adequate account of emotion experience requires more than a specification of cause; it also requires a description of content (i.e., of what is felt)...' (p. 376). Although no clear conclusions have been established about the shaping effects of intensity and frequency of emotions in learning (Hascher, 2007), negative and positive emotions have been found to enhance not only learning processes but also learners' development (Imai, 2010).

Emotions are elicited because of the individual value given to a particular situation, person or object. Emotional situations may provoke different reactions in students according to the importance they give to the effect of a particular situation, object or person on the achievement of their particular goals (Do and Schallert, 2004; Scherer, 2005; Varlander, 2008). As a result, emotional experiences in language learning classrooms engender feelings, physiological responses and observable behaviour in reaction to them. In this way, emotions influence the motivation energy language learners exhibit during learning activities.

### **3.6.1 Emotional experiences in foreign language learning**

It is widely recognised that the school environment stimulates diverse emotional experiences in students, which are a powerful influence on students' engagement, interest and motivation (Schutz and DeCuir, 2002; Efklides and Volet, 2005; Gläser-Zikuda and Järvelä, 2008). Feelings and emotions experienced by students are considered important in understanding learning processes, student motivation and effective teaching (Pekrun et al., 2002; Meyer and Turner, 2006). The crucial importance of emotional reactions in learning can be seen in the diversity of areas in which they are considered an essential determinant: students' well-being (Hascher, 2007, 2008), learning

processes (Järvenova and Järvelä, 2005), self-regulated learning (Bown and White, 2010) and achievement (Pekrun et al., 2002).

As previously mentioned, feelings and emotions are said to be a result of the evaluation students make of particular situations while learning (Pekrun, 2000). These evaluations are influenced by previous experiences, the social context and their personal goals (Pekrun et al., 2002; Sansone and Thoman, 2005). This is of particular relevance to the learning of a foreign language since students mostly come with previous positive or negative experiences, sometimes the learning environment is very different from previous ones, and they may have a diversity of motives for engaging in foreign language learning. The interplay of all these variables in one emotional event during classroom instruction may have different meanings for individual students and cause diverse effects on students' motivation (Do and Schallert, 2004). The resulting tasks learners decide to carry out account for the amount of motivational energy variation language learners go through during the different stages of their learning process (Shoaib and Dörnyei, 2004). These temporal and multiphase aspects of motivation have been separated into three stages: reasons for doing something, deciding to do something, and sustaining the effort or persisting (Williams and Burden, 1997, p. 121). In these three phases, emotional experiences play a significant role since behind the reasons for deciding to study a foreign language or keep up with the task, emotions and feelings are involved. Those feelings and emotions experienced during foreign language learning instruction are then important to understand so language teachers can adjust their approach to one that can help them reduce the negative impact emotions can have on learners' motivational energy, and enhance the promotion of those emotions that can activate it.

Restrictions in learning and emotions research arise from different theories on emotions (Hascher, 2010) and from the confusion emerging from the term 'emotions' (Kleinginna and Kleinginna, 1981). There is current concern over the divergent forms of research carried out regarding the topic because it is not helpful in building a cohesive body of research (Linnenbrinck-Garcia and Pekrun, 2011). Presenting a review of the diverse theories on emotions would not be possible in this literature review. My research aim is not to test a specific theory, assess emotions or measure their intensity, but to understand how and why foreign language learners' emotions emerged and how these experiences affected their motivational behaviour. Due to the scope of the topic at hand, a review of the experience of emotions in language learning settings is presented, in order to outline the recurrent emotions experienced during language learning instruction and their effects on learners' motivational behaviour.

### **3.6.2 Factors influencing emotional experiences in language learning**

Different authors on emotions research in education agree on the influence of the context, current learning experiences and external sources like peers or regulations on students' feelings and emotions (Pekrun et al., 2002; Efklides and Volet, 2005; Gläser-Zikuda et al., 2005; Hascher, 2008). Emotions originating during a learning process have been labelled as **academic emotions**, and these are subdivided into those associated with achievement (such as anxiety and sadness) and those associated with learning processes (such as enjoyment or relief) (Pekrun et al., 2002).

Pekrun et al. (2002) found that anxiety was the emotion most frequently reported in five studies conducted using quantitative and qualitative

approaches. Besides anxiety, enjoyment of learning, hope, pride, relief, anger, boredom, gratitude, admiration, contempt and envy were also reported. Pekrun and colleagues' studies reveal that students reported as many positive emotions as negative ones; thus the array of emotions students go through during learning is vast. A significant outcome of Pekrun et al.'s studies is the discovery of the role played by meta-emotions (feelings about emotions) on the management of emotions. Pekrun et al. suggest that making learners aware of their feelings about their emotions may be a tool teachers should use to help students face and overcome negative emotions.

Pekrun et al. (2002) found that positive emotions like enjoyment and pride correlated positively with students' motivation to learn and to achieve goals. Positive feelings and emotions originating in classroom instruction seem to trigger in students motivational energy that inspires them to act academically in order to achieve their specific goals and to continue experiencing those positive feelings and emotions in the pursuit of future academic goals. According to Scherer (2005), feelings and emotions prepare people to act; this implies that if someone is acting in certain ways the experience of a feeling or emotion can make him or her stop that particular action (changing their motivational energy) or continue making the best effort possible to achieve a particular goal. Thus, the change in motivational energy can be positive or negative; it depends on the interplay of emotions with internal and external factors. The results of this interplay can help students put more effort into a particular academic situation or can make them stop trying. In addition, feelings and emotions can help someone to redirect their motivational energy. In the course of academic work, students can find that something strongly interests them and focus all their attention and motivation on that particular task.



Garret and Young (2009) explored the emotional reactions originating during a Portuguese classroom course for a period of eight weeks. Although their study was not focused on accounting for emotions, emotions became the core of the description provided by Garret's responses to instruction, revealing the significant role emotions play in language learning processes. Garret and Young (2009) described 255 positive emotional experiences and 69 negative ones. Positive and negative experiences were mainly engendered because of the teacher's voice, social relations, cultural learning and language awareness. Personal experience of the emotional impact of learning a foreign language has made Garret reconsider her instructional approach and adjust it in order to promote positive affiliation among students, emphasise cooperation in learning tasks and be sensitive about forcing beginners to speak the target language. Experiencing being a beginner in any instructional setting is a powerful developmental force for teachers. Personally speaking, my experience as a PhD student has made me aware of the determinant impact of our emotions on the effort we are willing to exert in order to achieve our goals. In my case, the process has been inundated with positive and negative feelings coming from myself or from external stimuli that have influenced my energy to continue.

Imai (2010) investigated the manifestation of emotions during group-work preparation for an oral presentation to an English class. She found that during task preparation language learners' mental processes were structured through the verbalisation of their emotions, which then developed into common group feelings. Thus, emotions felt by the three members of the group served to construct the same feelings towards the activity through negotiation of their reactions to the learning task they were carrying out. From this, Imai (2010)

concludes that even negative emotions can be a developmental resource for foreign language learners.

Although conducted under a self-regulatory framework, the study carried out by Bown and White (2010) also reflects the emotional experiences learners in classrooms go through. In the individual reflections of three learners, the interaction of their previous language learning experiences, current learning events and goals played a significant role on their motivational behaviour. These reflections showed how even the scarce contact with instructors initiated by learners in the learning process evoked such negative emotions that their motivation was profoundly impacted. These students' emotions in face-to-face interaction with instructors were evoked because of the instructors' body language, non-verbal expressions and feedback provided. Thus, the significant effect of instructors in the ELT field was displayed even in autonomous language learning experiences, which confirms that the development of positive interpersonal relations in language learning processes is a core aspect of instilling motivation and effective ELT.

Drawing on the review of emotional studies in general education and in the ELT field, the most influential causes of emotional experiences are: teachers, peers, speaking skills, the teacher's feedback approach and the learning environment. A brief discussion of these aspects is presented below.

- **Teachers as main source of emotions in language classrooms**

The main source of students' feelings and emotions in instructed foreign language learning is the teacher (Williams and Burden, 1999; Tse, 2000; Williams et al., 2004; Lei, 2007; Yan and Horwitz, 2008; Garret and Young, 2009). These results are in line with motivation studies in which teachers are

said to be the determinant factor influencing students' motivation (Guilloteaux and Dörnyei, 2008). The teacher variable has been found to be the most significant one explaining the variance in the motivational behaviour displayed by learners in classrooms (Gläser-Zikuda et al., 2005). Thus, the link between the emotions caused by teachers and learners' motivational behaviour is a decisive one, since these emotions are going to determine the amount of effort and interest of students in learning tasks, influencing their motivation in this way.

Students' motivation may be increased by their desire to please the teacher because they like or appreciate them or because they want to minimise their disapproval (Blumenfeld, 1992). Although this spark of motivation is extrinsic, it may evolve into an intrinsic one. The teacher's authority type is another source for students' motivation fluctuation: it can be supporting or controlling. If students perceive the teacher's authority as supportive their motivation can be increased, whereas if they perceive it as controlling it may be detrimental to students' intrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Littlewood, 2000).

Lei (2007) found nine language teacher aspects (personality, vocation, knowledge, learning materials, classroom management, evaluation approach, affective expression, teaching approach and learning environment) that emotionally affect their students' learning process because of the synergy co-constructed by this interaction. Teachers engender emotions conducive to motivational energy when they are caring, humorous, genuine, knowledgeable, energetic, fair and diverse in their teaching approach (Tse, 2000; Lei, 2007; Yan and Horwitz, 2008; Garret and Young, 2009). However, teachers who compare learners' proficiency, use sharp feedback, are judgmental, unauthentic and treat learners unfairly cause feelings that are

not only detrimental to the learning process but to the learners' self-concepts as well. As stated by Williams and Burden (1999):

The messages that teachers convey in their classrooms, both explicitly and implicitly, about what they consider successful learning...profoundly affect their learners' developing notions of themselves as learners as well as their progress (p. 200).

- **The influence of peers on language learners' emotions and motivation**

Given that the process of instructed language learning is embedded in social interaction, interaction with teachers and peers causes diverse emotions that also have a strong influence on learners' motivational energy (Ushioda, 2003). Cooperation among peers has been found to elicit positive emotions, whereas competition causes negative emotions conducive to a decrease of the motivational energy displayed in classrooms (Dörnyei, 2001a; Yan and Horwitz, 2008). A Difference of language ability among students in a group fosters comparisons with peers that engender anxiety, envy, fear and reticence to participate in class (Woodrow, 2006; Yan and Horwitz, 2008; Zhang and Head, 2010). However, this comparison can also be a spark for motivation since learners may feel they have to be at the same level as their classmates and therefore make their best efforts to achieve this (Yan and Horwitz, 2008).

Peer pressure can evoke positive or negative emotions. A group with a high level of cohesion can cause positive emotions beneficial for learners' motivation, since students can adjust their performance in order to adhere to the group norms (Dörnyei, 2001a; Chang, 2010). Classmates can be supportive to their peers' learning processes by helping one another with homework, encouraging the practice of English and acknowledging each other's effort and progress (Chang, 2010). These practices among peers are

prone to engendering positive emotions that activate motivation. However, peers can also evoke negative emotions such as fear, anxiety and humiliation when mocking one another or minimising learners' efforts and progress, which makes students feel demotivated and sometimes even stop trying (Yan and Horwitz, 2008; Chang, 2010).

Peer support can help students not only to express their feelings and emotions during a learning process but can also help students to co-construct meaning. Imai (2010) reported how students felt confused and angry because, when preparing an oral presentation, the teacher provided an article for them to support their argument. However, they had trouble incorporating the information from the article into the sketch they were preparing. After expressing anger and confusion and even questioning the teacher's knowledge and commitment, learners started to co-construct meaning through peer scaffolding. The emotional experience presented by Imai (2010) shows how emotions, although subjectively experienced, can also be socially constructed by interaction with peers, and affect individual motivation in this way.

- **Speaking is an emotionally driven skill**

The skill of speaking in the target language has been revealed as being the one causing the most emotional reactions among language learners because of its interactive nature (Woodrow, 2006). Most students fear mispronouncing words or making grammatical mistakes when answering questions in front of the whole class, since they fear their peers mocking them or being negatively evaluated by teachers (Kitano, 2001; Yan and Horwitz, 2008). In two recent studies carried out in the context of China, it is stated that the reticence to

speaking or participating in classroom activities usually attributed to the cultural and educational environment in which learners have developed is not enhanced by culture but by the controlling teaching practices imposed on students (Xie, 2010; Zhang and Head, 2010). I believe this is not only relevant to the Chinese context, since in other contexts teachers may also make use of controlling practices when presenting a topic or giving feedback, which make students feel fearful and inhibited.

Students' interactions in class are modified because they see the teacher not as a facilitator but as an authority figure (Littlewood, 2000). Students who are taught in a class in which the teacher exercises a controlling authority type cannot generate or enhance their motivation. Students may feel that they have no control over any of the components of their learning process and emotions of frustration, discouragement and oppression may originate. A way to help students have a sense of ownership and control over their learning is by involving them in identifying their needs and giving them choices for fulfilling these needs (Graves, 2005). According to Williams and Burden (1997), an important determinant in language learning motivation is this sense of ownership which may also contribute to personal control and empowerment, increasing students' self-esteem. It is important, then, to give space to student-initiated ideas that most of the time are not allowed or suppressed because they do not facilitate classroom teacher control (Jackson, 2002). Controlling practices in language classrooms leave no opportunities for students to develop linguistically and are detrimental to their motivation because there is no space for the development of learners' confidence, which results in avoidance of learning activities to protect their self-worth.

- **The impact of feedback approaches on motivation in language classrooms**

Teachers should reflect on their approaches to providing feedback since they are giving students an evaluation which is usually the only reference they have to their language learning progress. Feedback can be informational (helping students' development of weaker areas) or controlling (making judgments about language proficiency of students (Dörnyei, 1994)); the latter should be avoided since it can send negative messages to students' motivational energy by making comparisons with external standards (e.g. native speakers' pronunciation) or group-related standards (e.g. comparisons to classmates' successes). A common practice in language classrooms is public praise which can also send very negative messages to students who may feel threatened by the comparisons students are prone to making. This practice of social comparison which is widely used in institutions and classroom settings is considered to be very detrimental to learners' intrinsic motivation (Carole, 1992).

Teachers' body language can convey very negative meanings and discourage students to participate or make a bigger effort in class, so care needs to be exercised when providing feedback. Even in a self-regulated framework where instances of face-to-face interaction were minimal and requested by learners, the facilitator's gestures and verbal feedback have been shown to have caused such negative emotions in one student that she withdrew from the course (Bown and White, 2010). Teachers should be careful about this aspect of language teaching because it can be very damaging to learners' self-confidence and motivational behaviour displayed in future learning situations.

- **Why is a positive classroom climate necessary for motivating foreign language learners?**

Humanistic education emphasises that learning is easiest, most meaningful and most effective when it takes place in a non-threatening environment (Gage and Beliner, 1992). According to different studies in general education and in foreign language learning, the learning environment is another powerful influence on students' emotional arousal and consequently on their motivational energy fluctuation (Meyer and Turner, 2002; Pekrun et al., 2002; Turner et al., 2003; Järvenova and Järvelä, 2005; Gläser-Zikuda and Järvelä, 2008; Yan and Horwitz, 2008). It seems that this principle is the foundation to have motivated students in language classrooms since the lack of a positive classroom environment has been shown to be one of the main causes of emotions among students in foreign language learning, where the learning of a foreign language can be more affectively demanding on students. As stated by Meyer and Turner (2006):

...engaging students in learning requires consistently positive emotional experiences, which contribute to a classroom climate that forms the foundation for teacher-student relationships and interactions necessary for motivation to learn (p. 377).

According to Turner et al. (2003), a positive classroom climate is fundamental to the promotion of positive emotions during instructional interactions in classroom settings. Thus, it is understandable why the teacher has been found to be the main cause of emotions in diverse studies. The teacher is the one who sets the principles of classroom structure, selects materials, groups students and establishes rapport among them, so it is his or her interpersonal skills that are going to set the scene for the promotion of a good learning environment.



### **3.7 Summary**

This chapter has presented a historical development of the inclusion of affectivity in ELT methods and the main criticisms of the approach. A review of the four motivational psychology theories that have informed this study's interpretation has also been introduced. A review of three L2 motivation theories relevant for the focus of this study has been presented. Finally, a review of research in the area of emotions in language learning education has served for the discussion to identify the range of emotional experiences faced by language learners across settings, and how these have affected their motivation.

# **Chapter 4**

## **Research Design**

Language is not the result of one's individuality; rather, language constructs one's subjectivity in ways that are historically and locally specific. (Richardson and Pierre, 2005, p. 961)

### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter describes the research design I used for the study. The purpose of this study is to understand the impact of students' emotional experiences on their motivation to learn English, how those emotions arose, and how students manage the emotional situations they encounter in the process of learning a foreign language. The chapter begins by discussing why I have chosen to use a qualitative approach as opposed to a quantitative one. Then, I outline the research approach and data collection methods used in the data generation stage of the study. The final section of this chapter describes my approach to data analysis and the issue of trustworthiness of the data.

### **4.1 Choosing a methodology**

According to Bassey (1999), research '...is systematic, critical and self critical enquiry which aims to contribute towards the advancement of knowledge and wisdom...' (p. 39). Two epistemological positions, positivism and interpretivism, have dissimilar views about what can be considered knowledge. Positivism implies that human behaviour should be studied in the same manner as the natural sciences since, to the positivists, '...knowledge exists beyond that which is objectively, immediately observable' (Opie, 2004,

p. 13) . Interpretivism, however, centres on understanding '... the subjective world of human experience' (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 23).

This epistemological divide gave origin to the qualitative versus quantitative debate. For decades, research has been classified into qualitative and quantitative approaches, based on '...different divisions of how social reality should be studied (Bryman, 2004, p. 4). In general terms, quantitative approaches assume that, for findings to be considered adequate, phenomena should be studied through empirical studies that can be tested. The aim of quantitative approaches is the measurement of variables and the relationships among them. Findings are presented in numerical form which emphasises the results of any phenomena and places no importance on their developmental processes (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000b). Qualitative approaches, on the other hand, developed from the need to treat people differently from cells or animals, requiring a suitable research approach. Thus, qualitative approaches emphasise the construction of reality through the interaction between the researcher, the study participants and the phenomena under investigation (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982).

I consider that quantitative approaches are somehow limited, in that they present us with only a numerical measurement of different phenomena without providing a sound explanation or description of what something is or why something is happening. Qualitative methods, on the other hand, allow to gain a deep understanding of the motives behind human behaviour (Barbour, 2008). The purpose of qualitative research is to examine any social phenomenon by enabling the researcher to go into the participants' naturalistic setting and try to get a comprehensive understanding of it (Bryman, 2004). Qualitative methodology aims at discovery and description of

people's experiences in order to interpret the meaning of those experiences. This is the opposite of the aims of quantitative research, which aims at hypothesis testing through the examination of relationship between variables (Cohen et al., 2000).

Researching people is a very complex task since human beings are very different from one another and are in constant evolution. I believe that this observation is more true now than ever before. We are living in a very rapidly changing world that forces us constantly to reshape our customs, values and ways of approaching things. However, I do not consider that findings from one context can necessarily be applied to people from different cultures and contexts. For instance, the motivation orientation of students living in an English-speaking country may be very different from that of Colombian or Mexican students learning English in their own countries. Those living in an English-speaking country face an immediate need to communicate with others and this fact is going to determine the level of energy they are able to exercise. For me, context plays a crucial role in understanding the origins and development of any social phenomena. I believe that knowledge and reality are formed through experiences of interacting with others in a particular setting. In addition, reality is an individual concept for human beings, since what may be true for you may not be true for me (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003; Barbour, 2008). I believe that we all talk about things referring to our personal experiences, and thus truth is shaped by the way it is individually experienced.

Due to this, a qualitative approach is best suited to yielding the data needed to gain a deep understanding of the emotional reactions engendered during foreign language classroom instruction. Although presenting the 'real' truth is something that I consider we cannot fully accomplish, because we are all

actors in the society in which we live and interact, I do believe that qualitative methods can help us to better understand a phenomenon in a given community or setting, since research findings are inevitably influenced by the socio-cultural background of participants (Flick, 2002).

For the reasons expressed above, I consider a positivist approach to investigating my research questions as not wholly appropriate. Interpretivism is a more suitable approach to follow in this study since it emphasises the meanings people give to their actions as a result of their perceptions and experiences in a particular context (Charmaz, 2006; Bogdan and Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 2009).

Qualitative researchers are aware of the subjectivity involved in this type of inquiry and stress its importance in the understanding any new knowledge (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000b). In qualitative research, the researcher is considered an instrument to portray other peoples' experiences of a specific phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). Due to his or her closeness to the research participants and context, the researcher's own history interacts with his or her research and thus influences the way he or she conducts and analyses it (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Janesick, 2000). It is because of this that identifying the researcher's biases is important in order to understand '...how they may be shaping the collection and interpretation of data' (Merriam, 2009, p. 15). For qualitative researchers the phenomenon studied has the greatest priority and the interpretation of it is co-created from participants' experiences and the researcher's thinking (Charmaz, 2001). As suggested by Merriam (2009), qualitative research is based on a constructivist philosophical stance which:

...assumes that reality is socially constructed, that is, there is no single, observable reality. Rather, there are multiple realities, or interpretations, of a single event. Researchers do not 'find' knowledge, they construct it (p. 9).

Fields of enquiry that have traditionally applied quantitative methods, for example, educational psychology and motivation in language learning, are now turning to qualitative methods because of a new realisation of the richness of this type of approach. As Schutz and Lanehart state, 'There is a growing movement in educational psychology, as well as other areas, toward the inclusion of qualitative methods' (2002, p. 68). In saying this I am not claiming that the only way to carry out research is through a qualitative approach; indeed, I consider that both paradigms have a place in research, and that the choice of one or the other should depend on which can best fulfil a research purpose and focus.

Different features have been identified as general characteristics of qualitative research (Creswell, 1998; Cohen et al., 2000; Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006; Merriam, 2009). Those that apply to my research are the following: naturalistic (the natural setting is the direct source of data, and the researcher is the key instrument), contextual (to understand any phenomenon it is necessary to understand the context in which it occurs), interpretative (focusing on participants' meanings), inductive (interpretation of data is developed during the data generation stage) and flexible (research is not fixed but flexible to respond to participants' meanings of the phenomena under investigation).

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000b) '... qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of their meanings people bring to them' (p. 3). This is of

particular importance to the aim of this study since its purpose is to understand foreign language learners in a Southeast Mexican university. The naturalistic feature is desirable in this study since it aims at exploring the role of emotions in the motivation fluctuation of foreign language learners in Mexico. My purpose is to understand how students in this particular and unique context experience emotional reactions and what types of interactions are developed there. Thus, the study was carried out in the natural setting where the phenomenon had been identified (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000b; Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006).

The second feature of qualitative research is closely related to the previous one, since a natural setting refers to the context in which a phenomenon occurs. Thus this study will ‘...emphasize the importance of the contextual understanding of social behaviour’ (Bryman, 2004, p. 281). This feature is reasonable since in order to understand why people behave in certain ways, it is necessary to be sensitive and aware of the features of the socio-political context as described in Chapter One. This study was carried out in the English Department of the Mayche University. This state university was established in 1991, and its ELT programme has been very popular since its opening. Every year around 60 students are accepted onto the degree, and are divided into two groups. The participants of this study were in their second year of university and the study was conducted while they took their second English language course. The Mayche University is located in the capital city of a very popular and touristic area, which impacts on the need to learn English as a means to secure employment in the touristic zone. Some students who participated in the study were from nearby rural towns and were facing the demands of living alone for the first time as well as struggling financially, as most of them were not from middle class families. The Mayche

University is located next to the Caribbean Sea and the weather is very hot all year round. The weather conditions have led inhabitants to start working at 7:00am to avoid the hottest hours of the day and to take a break from 2:00 to 4:00pm to eat and rest. After reenergising, inhabitants continue working at 5:00pm when weather conditions are not as suffocating as in the previous hours.

According to Gubrium and Holstein (2000), an:

Interpretive practice engages both the *hows* and the *whats* of social reality; it is centered both in how people methodically construct their experiences and their words and in the configurations of meaning and institutional life...(p. 488).

The purpose of this study is to understand how students' emotional experiences impact on their motivation fluctuation. Thus, students' experiences were analysed in the light of their actions and goals in the process of studying the ELT programme at the Mayche University. As Merriam (2009) states, '...the key concern is understanding the phenomenon of interest from the participants' perspectives, not the researcher's' (p. 14).

For Mertens (1998), the use of an inductive approach allows the researcher to approach the data '...without imposing pre-existing expectations on the phenomena under study' (p. 160). However, Schwandt (1993) suggests that grounded theory is a process that involves both induction and deduction:

...guided by prior theoretical commitments and conceptual schemes. In this means of analysis, as well as in any other attempt to move from field notes to concepts and interpretations, the task is far from purely inductive and inferential (p. 9).



Following this approach, the researcher builds on their data to refine research questions and to reshape the process of the study. In reviewing literature about a particular topic the researcher uses theory to build his or her study, to refine its questions, and to select the methods to generate and to analyse the data. As Merriam (2009) suggests, 'All investigations are informed by some discipline-specific theoretical framework that enables us to focus our inquiry and interpret the data' (p. 16). While data was being generated, I started to familiarise myself with my growing data corpus from the very beginning in order to understand the participants' behaviour in relation to the emotions experienced in their foreign language learning process. The analysis of data was done inductively in order to allow themes to emerge from the meaning participants were giving to their emotional experiences.

Flexibility in qualitative research allows researchers to shift direction if necessary while conducting a study (Bryman, 2004). This is closely related to the previous feature, since induction in the analysis of data allows the researcher to go back and forth to data and to modify the focus of research if needed. One of this study's main methods of data collection is semi-structured interviews, which are usually carried out following guided questions to allow the interviewee to freely express what he or she considers important (Freebody, 2003). I decided to use a semi-structured format because, in the course of conducting the interviews, some issues that I may not have considered might be highlighted by students as impacting on their affective state in foreign language learning. As Silverman (2000) states, 'The beauty of qualitative research is that its rich data can offer the opportunity to change focus as the ongoing analysis suggests' (p. 63).

According to Schwandt (2000), ‘...to understand a particular social action...the inquirer must grasp the meanings that constitute that action’ (p. 191). As mentioned above, people’s reality is constructed through individual experience; thus, the same situation is likely to mean something different for two people. In order to understand better how emotions shape students’ motivation in foreign language classrooms, it is necessary to listen to their experiences and to the meanings they give to those experiences. It is through students’ experiences that changes can be made in teaching practices by adjusting these to students’ concerns or needs. I consider that helping students to maximise their learning opportunities is the main aim of teachers not only in Mexico but in any part of the world. It is because of this that I aim to contribute to effective teaching practices through the shared experience of emotions in learning by participants in this study.

#### **4.2        Myself as researcher**

Understanding the researcher’s background and aims in pursuing a specific line of research can aid readers in comprehending the researcher’s interpretation and analysis of the data generated (Mertens, 1998; Merriam, 2009). In this vein, Pavlenko (2007) suggests that analysis cannot be done in a context vacuum since:

...the notion that themes and patterns ‘emerge freely’ in analysis, taking shape of a ‘grounded theory’, is in itself naive and misleading, because it obscures the sociohistoric and cultural influences on the researcher’s conceptual lens (p. 167).

I have been a teacher at the study site for 12 years. Thus, my position as a member of staff might be considered what Foster (1996) defines as *the complete participant* in practitioner research in education, where ‘... teachers

research aspects of their own practice or institution' (p. 77). This role has some advantages, the most important being the ease of access to the research site and participants. Another advantage is context familiarity, as I am familiar with the cultural and social norms of the society and academic institution in which this study took place. Although Burgess (1985) considers this a disadvantage because '...easily assumptions can be made and situations taken for granted with the result that questions remain unanswered' (p. 10), I consider that in this study my familiarity allowed me to understand some insights participants expressed in relation to specific colleagues or administrative procedures. As Kvale (1996) puts it, 'Familiarity with the content of an investigation is not obtained only through literature and theoretical studies' (p. 96). Thus, I consider that my knowledge of the study context is more an advantage than a disadvantage because by knowing the context well, I was able to understand expressions, social conventions and common assumptions of students completely.

My line of enquiry has always been directed towards understanding students since I consider that it is through their experience that teachers can gain insight into the best ways to help them in the learning process. Thus, my research is shaped by my own experience as a language learner and English teacher in Mexico, and I am aware that all my learning and cultural experiences interact with my research approach and procedures. In order to understand the phenomenon I have identified as my research focus, I need to interpret what my participants have to say about it (Merriam, 2009). However, I am also aware that the reality they present to me may be very different from my own experience as a teacher in the research setting, but this is the richness of qualitative research (Silverman, 2006).

Thus, the 'reality' I am going to present was developed through different students' experiences of the same process. In this case I am part of that educational environment and the challenge is to be conscious of how my own ideas, personal experiences and beliefs were immersed in my research. I see my research as '...an intricate fabric composed of minute threads, many colors, different textures, and various blends of material' (Creswell, 1998, p. 13). However, I recognise that in conducting this research study, I am only a means or, as Janesick (2000) states, '...the qualitative researcher is the research instrument' (p. 380).

Students were informed about my position as a teacher at the research site for almost 12 years during my presentation of the study. There is a challenge in trying to represent other people's experiences since, as stated by Denzin and Lincoln (2000b), '...the qualitative research act can no longer be viewed from within a neutral or objective positivist perspective' (p. 18). Students' experiences will be diverse, and the emotions they experience will be shaped by their previous personal and learning experiences. Although I have the experience of teaching at the research site, the students' view of the setting might be very different from mine.

In approaching the phenomena, I am aware that although my values, beliefs and experiences are valuable, my task is to present the participants' story. In doing this I consider myself an '*...active learner* who can tell the story from the participants' view rather than as an 'expert' who passes judgment on participants' (Creswell, 1998, p. 18). I will attempt to do this by constructing students' reality from a constructionist perspective in which '...social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors' (Bryman, 2004, p. 17).

### **4.3 Participants in the study**

A fundamental issue that concerns qualitative researchers is deciding which cohort of participants would be the most suitable to respond to his or her research questions. It is necessary to decide on which would be the best cohort of participants to address the research purpose in the early stages of any research study since this decision contributes to the quality of the research undertaken (Mertens, 1998; Cohen et al., 2000). Although, ideally, obtaining data for all those experiencing a particular phenomenon is desirable, there are access and time constraints which prevent a researcher from doing this. Thus, obtaining information from a representative group of the people experiencing a phenomenon is the most common practice since, as Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) state, '...the researcher wants to ensure that he or she obtains a sample that is uniquely suited to the intent of the study' (p. 434).

An important aspect to keep in mind when deciding which would be the best cohort of participants for a specific piece of research is the approach it follows. Since qualitative studies do not aim to produce a statistically representative sample or to draw statistical inferences, purposive samples are employed. As Denzin and Lincoln (2000a) state:

...qualitative researchers employ theoretical or purposive, and not random, sampling models. They seek out groups, settings, and individuals where and for whom the processes being studied are most likely to occur (p. 370).

This was crucial for my research purpose since, as I mentioned in my introduction chapter, students tend to lose the original motivation they bring to study the ELT programme by the end of their first year. Thus, a group of students who were starting their second year was best suited to the purpose of the investigation. Every academic year two new groups of between 25 and

30 students register for the degree; thus, students in one of these groups were the ones who took part in the study.

The group selected was chosen because the teacher in charge of the language class agreed to give me access; thus, convenience sampling was also exercised (Bryman, 2004). Although at the early stages of the research project I thought about having separate sessions with the students in order to ask them to carry out some activities, later reviews of the literature allowed me to take the decision not to do it since, as Do and Schallert (2004) advise, 'Studies are needed that focus on emotions and moods embedded in a real context rather than induced and separated out for investigation' (p. 620). Thus, purposeful sampling was employed and the sample was small (18 participants) because the intention was to obtain rich information about students' emotional experiences in classroom language instruction and the effect of those on motivation. As stated by Mertens (1998), 'In interpretive/constructivist work, samples tend to be relatively small because of the depth of information that is sought from each case or individual' (p. 264).

Different approaches to purposive sampling have been identified; most of these approaches focus on different characteristics of the sample selected, such as extreme cases, confirming and disconfirming cases or politically important cases. In this study there was no selection of members of the group since it was already selected and organised through the university's administrative procedures. Participation was voluntary and 18 students agreed to share their emotional experiences during classroom language instruction.

Although during the development of the research design I thought about doing the project with students in the last year of the ELT programme, I later decided

to focus on students in their second year because, according to my experience, it is during this year that students seem to lose that initial motivation they come with. Thus, understanding students' motivational development before starting the ELT programme is background knowledge needed to understand what changes they go through during their first year and how these affect their motivation. As stated by Merriam (2009), 'Purposeful sampling is based on the assumptions that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned' (p. 77).

#### **4.4 Obtaining access to and from participants**

In order to gain access to the research group I selected as the most suitable for my research purpose, initial contacts were made with the head of the ELT programme at the Mayche University where the research was conducted. After the initial permission to carry out the research was obtained, I contacted the two teachers who are usually in charge of the language classes of the two groups in the ELT programme. One of them agreed to allow me to contact students on the first day of the course in order to talk to them about my research project so I could get their attention and hopefully their agreement to take part in my study. As Cohen et al. (2000) advise, '...the problem of access is not resolved once one has been given permission to use the school or organization' (p. 67). Bryman (2004) elaborates:

You still need access to *people*. Simply because you have gained access to an organization does not mean that you will have an easy passage through the organization. Securing access is in many ways an ongoing activity (p. 299).

I consider this step a crucial one for my study since students needed to be willing not only to participate but also to reveal some sensitive information. Thus, they needed to be informed about who I was and why I was undertaking this project so they could make an informed decision at the earliest possible point of the study.

After consent was obtained from participants, they were provided with my contact details and office hours so they could come to talk about any issue concerning the research development. I consider that this was important because participants were able to be confident that they could contact me at any point during the research process if they wished to do so.

#### **4.5 Data generation and data collection methods**

The use of different methods, instruments and triangulation is necessary to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. This study focused on 18 students in their second year of the ELT programme at the Mayche University. In seeking to understand the influence of emotions on students' motivation fluctuation, one research question and three sub-questions were explored.

### **3. How do EFL learners' affective experiences in the classroom in a Mexican university impact on their motivation to learn?**

**1a. How does affective experience manifest itself?**

**1b. What factors influence the nature of such experiences?**

**1c. How is motivation connected to affective experience?**



In order to gather data to respond to the main research question and sub-questions, the following data collection methods were selected as best suitable to obtain the required data: personal narratives, semi-structured interviews, and students' Emotional Experience Journals. The use of these data collection methods aimed to add rigour, breadth and depth to the study. Although some studies limit the range of emotions described by students, the purpose of this study was to understand the impact of students' emotional experiences on their motivation, how those emotions originate, and how students manage the emotional experiences they encounter in the process of learning a foreign language. Thus, no limit on the range of emotions to describe was imposed on students. According to Pekrun et al. (2002):

Emotional diversity implies that theory-driven approaches to students' emotions that limit the range of emotions considered for theoretical reasons may be in danger of missing important parts of students' affective life (p. 93).

In order not to miss information considered valuable for the students' emotional-motivational relationship they were free to report on any emotions experienced as a result of any situation originating during classroom hours.

#### **4.5.1 Previous English language studies questionnaire**

Information on previous English language studies was collected in order to frame students' foreign language educational background. All participants were asked to complete a brief questionnaire after they had agreed to take part in the study. The content of the questionnaire was limited to 12 questions which were expected to provide information on students' personal data such as age, gender, time dedicated to their studies, reasons for having chosen the

ELT programme and experience in learning English as a foreign language (see Appendix A).

#### **4.5.2 Personal narratives**

Learners' autobiographies, journals, diaries and personal narratives have become a popular means of data generation in foreign language learning studies over the past decade. According to Pavlenko (2007), narratives have emerged '...as the central means by which people give their lives meaning across time' (p. 164). Since the first diary studies in the field of ELT (see for example Schumann, and Bailey, (1980), the use of these methods has shed light on diverse topics of interest for ELT practitioners and researchers such as learning strategies and learner anxiety, among others.

Personal narratives contribute to research into ELT by providing access to learners' private worlds, uncovering new links in learning processes and by allowing researchers to obtain data in a context where other types of sources may not be possible (Pavlenko, 2007). Pavlenko classifies narratives into three common types used in the ELT field: diaries and journals, linguistic biographies and autobiographies, and language memoirs. The outcomes of these three narratives are three different information types which are interconnected: subject reality (i.e. findings on how participants experience events), life reality (i.e. findings on participants' reality) and text reality (i.e. findings on participants' ways of narrating events) (Denzin, 1989; Nekvapil, 2003). The fact that language is a social matter and that we learn it from people around us and use it with many others provides us with useful information about diverse language situations that can be analysed (Nekvapil, 2003).

Personal narratives were selected as the instrument to find out about the development of students' motivation to register in the ELT programme. Different studies' results have demonstrated that students bring previous learning experiences, assumptions and expectations when engaging in a new learning situation (Salonen et al., 1998). Students were asked to focus on those emotional moments prior to registering in the ELT programme in order to find out the situations that were determinant in giving rise to their initial motivation. According to Oxford (1995), 'The technique of writing language learning histories gives learners the opportunity to describe their own language learner experiences and express their feelings about those experiences' (p. 581). Since this study is focused on students' feelings, I felt that this instrument would be best suited to finding out not only the origin of the students' motivation but also of the feelings experienced during those specific moments when motivation developed.

One of the main advantages of personal narratives is that they give us access into learners' private worlds and provide rich data (Pavlenko, 2002, 2007). Since emotions are not always observable, the best way to get into people's feelings and emotions is to let them narrate them to us. Thus, by asking students to evoke those emotional moments that made them think about or decide to register in the ELT programme, students would be writing a personal narrative or autoethnography. As described in Chapter Two, autoethnographies allow the participants' voices to be heard first-hand without any interpretation from the researcher. Thus, participants had the opportunity to describe and to reflect on those events that led them to register in the ELT programme. As stated by Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000), 'Personal narratives...bring to the surface aspects of human activity...that cannot be captured in the more traditional approach to research' (p. 159). Participants

did this in their mother tongue rather than in English so that they were not limited in describing their feelings by using a foreign language (see Appendix B).

### **4.5.3 Semi-structured interviews**

Interviews are the core method of qualitative approaches since it is through conversation that people express their views, values, perceptions, attitudes and beliefs (Kvale, 2009). Interviews are classified into structured or fixed-response, semi-structured and open-ended interviews (Freebody, 2003). Structured interviews restrict the relevance of a topic to a set of questions, thus no information beyond answers to those questions already formulated is sought. This type of interview is most useful when testing a specific hypothesis since it allows comparison and contrast (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006). Semi-structured interviews have some guiding questions which allow flexibility in the relevance of the information. Usually the aim is to pursue the information considered relevant by the interviewee. Thus, sometimes the focus of the interview has to be shifted according to the information an interviewee considers to be the most pertinent. According to Freebody (2003):

Semi-structured interviews aim to have something of the best of both worlds by establishing a core of issues to be covered, but at the same time leaving the sequence and the relevances of the interviewee free to vary, around and out from that core (p. 133).

Open-ended interviews resemble informal conversations; however, they are the most difficult type of interviews to conduct since ethical issues emerge because of '...researching private lives and placing accounts in the public arena' (Birch et al., 2002, p. 1). Thus, the researcher may find that some of the questions are too private to be asked, or that some topics are so sensitive that

a limit should be placed on how deep to go, or researchers may end up asking themselves about what consequences of collaborating in a study could pose to participants (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006; Kvale, 2009). These types of interviews are employed when the study is focused on obtaining people's views and experiences with regard to a particular phenomenon.

As with all research methods, interviews have strengths and weaknesses. The flexibility for both interviewers and interviewees in terms of questions and answers that can be adjusted or refined over the course of an interview is a strength of the method. In addition, further information can be sought by asking the interviewee for more detail about an answer provided which the interviewer not have considered before and may decide to pursue further because of the relevance given to it by the interviewee. Interviewees have the freedom to express freely and precisely what they consider to be of importance with regard to the phenomena being investigated. Individual interviews also allow the interviewer to make notes about the tone of voice or facial expressions considered important to the understanding of the views expressed by the interviewee. Interviewees may sometimes answer what they think the interviewer wants to hear, thus threatening the credibility of the study. Semi-structured interviews give researchers the freedom to decide to pose direct questions or to go more indirectly to the important issues they want to find out about (Kvale, 2009). Thus this is another strength of this type of interview, since 'The more spontaneous the interview procedure, the more likely one is to obtain unprompted, lively, and unexpected answers from the interviewees' (Kvale, 2009, p. 131).

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2006), a principle that applies to any type of interview is that '...the researcher must establish an atmosphere of trust,

cooperation, and mutual respect if he or she is to obtain accurate information' (p. 456). It is because of this aim of generating relevant information for a research topic that the interaction developed with an interviewee is very important. There are some topics that may not be easy to talk about; therefore certain skills are required from the interviewer in order to make the interviewee feel confident and willing to disclose the information asked for. In order to establish a rapport with interviewees the interview should be conducted like an informal conversation resembling as much as possible a chat between friends.

Some points that need to be considered in order to give the interviewee as much confidence as possible to express his or her views are as follows: refraining from making any judgments about their experiences; letting them talk and encouraging them with sympathetic gestures and relevant questions; communicating a sincere interest in what participants are saying; and being sensitive about participants' attitudes towards research (Taylor and Bodgan, 1998). It is important for the interviewer to assume a neutral position while interviewing since it is fundamental for this method's success. An interviewer should avoid '...arguing, debating, or otherwise letting personal views be known' (Merriam, 2009, p. 106).

Semi-structured interviews were selected as one of the main instruments of this research because the study focused on exploring students' emotional reactions in language learning motivation fluctuation. Since emotions cannot always be observed, interviews were identified as a suitable source of data to explore students' affective experiences. According to Yan and Horwitz (2008), '...studies that encourage learner reflection through interviews...would seem to have the potential to yield a richer understanding of learners' perceptions...' (p. 153). Thus in order to be able to explore students' affective experiences in

language learning instruction a semi-structured interview guide was designed to be used as a general guide so that some issues that were not considered by the researcher and that participants considered important could be addressed in the interview (see Appendix C).

According to Barbour (2008), semi-structured interviews ‘... allow for the ordering of questions to be employed flexibly to take account of the priority accorded each topic by the interviewee’ (p. 17). Since my study was focused on finding out about students’ emotional reactions, semi-structured interviews were the most appropriate type of interview as the issues I wanted to focus on were already defined before the interview. As Bryman (2004) puts it, ‘If the researcher is beginning the investigation with a fairly clear focus...it is likely that semi-structured interviewing will be preferred’ (p. 323).

Along the same lines, Kvale (1996) states that: ‘An interview is a conversation that has a structure and a purpose’ (p. 6). Thus, semi-structured interviews were selected as best suited to allowing students to describe their emotional experiences in classroom instruction. Through face-to-face prompting of students to describe these experiences, awareness about the impact of their emotions on their language learning motivation could be raised.

#### **4.5.4 Students’ Emotional Experiences Journal (SEEJ)**

The emergence of the concept of ‘learner-centredness’ in the late 1970s created a movement in different areas of the ELT field. In research, the first studies in language learning which employed journals were those of Schumann (1980) and Bailey (1980). According to Abbuhl and Mackey (2008), journals ‘...represent holistic accounts of language learning from a learner’s viewpoint’ (p. 105). This is of particular importance for my research purpose

since it was the learners' viewpoints about those emotions originating during classroom instruction that I was interested in finding out about; why these emotions were experienced and what factors triggered them. According to Bailey and Nunan (1996):

The use of self-report data from personal journals allows us to tap into affective factors...learners' own perceptions...which are normally hidden or largely inaccessible to external observers (p. 197).

Thus, journals have proven to be a suitable method to allow learners to record the experience of learning a foreign language introspectively (Bailey and Ochsner, 1983). According to Lee (2007):

Journals are reflections on teaching and learning issues that student teachers write on a regular basis. They are considered a useful instrument for developing reflection, since they allow teacher learners a space to reflect (p. 321).

In this study, the journals were focused on those events students experienced during classroom instruction that triggered in them an emotional reaction. According to Hascher (2008), self-reports about emotions in educational settings should not be 'weighted' but contextualised, since emotions originate because of specific situations. Thus, students were asked not only to report on the emotions experienced, but also to describe why and how that emotion originated. In order to facilitate freedom of expression, students were asked to do this in their mother tongue.



Students were asked to keep a journal over 12 weeks of their term in which they could report on the different emotions experienced in their classroom instructed language learning. According to Hascher (2008), students' journals:

...are a useful qualitative approach to explore students emotions...they offer a precise view on an individual's perspective and they enable a context-sensitive understanding of emotions in schools (p. 95).

Students were free to report about any emotion felt. They were not restricted to a set of specific emotions since, by limiting students to concentrating on specific emotions, I could have missed emotional experiences students considered important. This is one of the common limitations of studies on emotions in education (Pekrun et al., 2002).

Students described the situations that caused an emotional reaction, how they felt during that event, what effects the emotion had on their motivational energy, and what their reaction to it was. Students handed in their journals every week and were asked to focus on those emotional moments they considered to have had an impact on their motivational energy. Thus, I was expecting that the journal would allow the students to reflect not only on the situations and their reactions to them, but also to analyse if the events described had any impact on their motivation or not. Journal writing allowed students to reflect on why some changes may have been happening to their language learning motivational energy and to assess if emotions originated in classroom instruction were affecting it or not. An important feature of journals is that they allow interpretation; this was something very helpful for my research purpose since students were giving me information about why they considered they reacted in certain ways to a specific event and thus gave me valuable insights for data analysis.

## 4.6 Ethics in qualitative research

Doing research raises ethical issues that need to be considered before going onto the data generation stage. Wellington (2000) considers that ethical issues are present in five areas of research: design, methods, analysis, presentation and findings; however, at the core of ethics is sensitivity and respect. In my study the first ethical issues emerged while writing autoethnographically in Chapter Two about my emotional experiences in my language learning history. Although I was only writing about my experiences, different people emerged as having an active role in them. Thus, the issue of sensitivity was clearly present in the chapter due to the nature of the topic and the respect I needed to give to the people involved, since most of them are important people in my life. Thus, in order to protect those people, names were changed and the places where the situations took place were also modified.

Having had the experience of writing about my own emotions during my language learning process made me aware of the sensitivity of the topic. Thus, in order to help students write their personal narratives following ethical procedures, they were introduced to the four non-negotiable journalistic norms stated by Denzin (1997): **accuracy** (being honest with readers by presenting a realistic account of events), **nonmaleficence** (avoiding harm to those involved in narratives by protecting their identities), **the right to know** (informing readers if an account includes fiction) and **making one's moral position known** (by engaging in writing participants will be revealing and constructing their position in the world and in *their* worlds). I explained to students how these four norms were followed in my two personal narratives by changing the identities of people and places included in them, and making clear that my accounts were truthful representations of my experiences.

Consent is the main ethical issue in conducting any research since people should voluntarily decide to participate or not. Silverman (2000) points out that obtaining informed consent involves giving participants as much information as necessary to affect their decision to take part in a study or not, assuring that their participation is voluntary. In addition, the researcher must be sure that they understand all the written and verbal information provided, especially if it is not in their native language.

In my study, I talked to the two teachers who would be in charge of the groups that I had decided would be best suited to fulfilling the purpose of the research. One of them agreed to give me some time during her lecture hours to conduct the study and so this became the group from which students were asked to participate. After having obtained consent from the teacher, I talked to students on the first day of their term in order to provide them with information about the project, and stated its purpose and why I was doing it. Students were invited to participate but were reassured that, if they decided not to, it would not make any difference to their course grades, as I anticipated that this would be their main concern about taking part in the study. Students were also informed that if at a certain time during the research they felt they did not want to continue with it, they could withdraw. I encouraged students to participate because I considered that they could gain some insights about themselves as students and as human beings that could help them to understand themselves better and hopefully help them to improve. I believe that any activity one decides to carry out gives one an experience which becomes knowledge one can use at some point. Thus, students who agreed to participate were asked to sign a participant consent form in which they were informed of the purpose of the research, the different activities involved, what

was expected of them and who to contact if they wanted to raise any issues regarding the study (see Appendix D).

A controversial issue with regard to research ethics is about giving students full information about the research questions. According to Hollway and Jefferson (2000), participants should be informed about the research purpose in general terms without specifying the questions the researcher is seeking to answer, since it is important '...not to prejudice the research by signalling in the framing of the information the researcher's expectations' (p. 86). I had anticipated not giving students the precise research questions I was seeking answers to because I did not want them to modify their participation in order to address my research questions. Fortunately, they were not concerned about my specific research questions so this was not an issue in this study.

Another crucial aspect of ethics is that of confidentiality. Kvale (1996) emphasises the participants' right to privacy. Thus, it is necessary for participants to know in advance who will have access to the data generated in the process of the study. Since my study dealt with the sensitive topic of emotions in an educational setting where many people are likely to be involved, students were asked to choose a pseudonym for themselves and asked to change the names of peers or teachers if they were portrayed in any of their experiences. Students were also provided with a research information hand-out in which they were assured of the confidentiality of their participation, informed about who would have access to the data and how the data would be stored (see Appendix E).

The researcher's role in any study also implies ethical issues concerning his or her responsibility to his or her field of study, since the findings yielded from his or her research project should be objective and verified (Kvale, 1996). Thus, it is important for researchers to be honest at all stages of conducting a study to ensure its soundness.

#### **4.7 Data collection process**

This section describes how the collection of data was carried out in order to establish a link between the methodology used and the analysis of the data. The period of data collection started on August 31, 2009 and ended on December 5, 2009. As mentioned above, I interacted with students during the first two weeks of the course and carried out some activities in order to sensitise them to the topic of emotions (see Appendix F). These two weeks also allowed me to familiarise students with the procedures that were undertaken during the data collection period. After these two initiation weeks students started their journal writing, focusing on their emotions in their foreign language learning process. During these two weeks students wrote their personal narratives which gave me an understanding of the diversity of motivations that had led students to register in the ELT programme. This was the first step in the analysis of data which continued over the study period after students electronically sent their journal entries every Friday. As the study continued, I was able to reflect on the experiences expressed in their journal entries. This ongoing analysis was helpful in identifying what was important to students' motivational energy, and also helped with the final analysis presented in the next chapter.

#### **4.7.1 Personal narratives**

Personal narratives were written during the first two weeks of the study. After presenting the study's purpose and getting consent from students, I started to sensitise students through a visualisation exercise in which students were asked to see themselves in a language learning class. This activity was done using soft and relaxing music in order to help them recall emotions and feelings in previous learning events. Some students really got into the activity, but others were not comfortable with it as they kept opening their eyes or laughing.

The objective of the visualisation exercise was to make the students aware of their emotions and to allow them to think about them. After the visualisation, students were asked to draw or write about the experience. Most of them wrote or talked about the emotions the activity evoked. Only a few of them were able to recall a specific situation or event. However, this was the first step in raising participants' awareness about emotions in educational settings.

In the second session students were introduced to autoethnography as a research method through my own personal narratives. I asked students to work in pairs; each was given a personal narrative and were asked to read them. I then asked them to discuss in pairs their reactions to the two emotional events described. Later, I asked some of them to share their reactions with the rest of the group. After three students shared their feelings, I told them that the student portrayed in the narratives was me. There was a moment of silence; I think they were surprised. I noticed that one of the students was in tears and I felt very nervous. I told them that we all, even their teachers, have experienced very unpleasant events during our language learning process, so they should be prepared to face those events with the very best attitude. I

considered that the purpose of the activity was achieved. I then asked students to start thinking about those specific events that had sparked their initial motivation to register in the ELT programme.

In the third session, I asked students to go back to those special moments that raised in them the desire to study the ELT programme. Students were asked to recall with whom and where they were, what was happening, how they felt and what or who inspired them to study the ELT programme. Before asking students to start writing a first draft, I explained to them the importance of following ethical procedures during writing and why it is necessary to protect yourself and the people involved in any autoethnography. After introducing students to the ethical guidelines they should follow, participants had a week to complete their personal narratives. The fourth session was about familiarising them with the journal format they had to hand in electronically every week. I asked students to read the format carefully and they attempted to complete one entry. During the session I answered some students' doubts and gave them some specific examples of descriptions of emotions using the journal format. After making sure students had understood, I gave them a schedule of the dates I expected them to send their journals electronically. I then reminded them that after the journal stage of the study had finished, I would proceed with the interviews.

That was the end of the two initiation weeks. I went to their classroom a week later in order to collect students' personal narratives and to remind them of their first journal entry deadline.

#### **4.7.2 Students' Emotional Experiences Journals**

Students sent their journal entries electronically every Friday. I asked students to try to send at least three entries per week. Students were free to report on any emotion, either positive or negative; however, I asked students to focus on those which had had a strong impact on them. The first entries students sent were focused on their adaptation to the classes being carried out in English. Students were starting their second year of the ELT programme which is really the start of the degree, since during the first year they have to complete some foundation courses such as mathematics, psychology, regional studies etc. Thus students reported feeling happy about continuing with their studies but at the same time afraid and nervous about not understanding everything that was said or explained because classes were all in English.

Some entries were closely focused on specific events, but others were vague or unspecific. After reviewing the first entries, I communicated with students to remind them of the objective of the journal and to encourage them to continue in the project since some of them had already withdrawn from participation. There were initially 24 in the group and although all of them agreed to participate, six had already decided not to continue to the second stage of journal writing. Every week, I received students' journals entries. Some students wrote three, others two and most of them only one entry per week. Every Monday I sent them a thank you message and an encouraging note so they kept up with writing about their emotions.

After the first four weeks, I did an evaluation exercise about participants' writing. I decided to send them an individual message highlighting the strengths in their writing and encouraging them to be more descriptive. Some were not able to identify their emotions so I sent them further explanations.



There were three students who were really descriptive and did not limit themselves in sharing their emotions, which was very good. Some were not good at handling deadlines, so I had to keep reminding them about sending me their entries.

In the sixth week of the journal writing period, an ethical issue arose after reading a journal entry. One female student seemed to be going through a period of depression because she felt very oppressed by her parents' over-protection. She expressed feeling the need to talk to someone about it. I felt that I had to respond to the journal's content because I would feel uncomfortable just reading it and making notes about it. It was something I did not expect, but I felt I had to respond to. I sent her an e-mail saying that we could talk if she felt that I could help, or that she could make an appointment with the university counsellor to talk about her problems because I felt she really needed to express herself. She did not reply and stopped sending her journal for three weeks. In the final week she sent only one entry and I was able to interview her, but she never mentioned the incident again so I decided not to push her if she did not want to talk. At the end of the 12-week period of journal writing, I had received 325 journal entries from the 18 students who had completed their participation in the project.

During the data collection process of personal narratives and journal writing, I kept a journal in which I wrote my impressions and reactions after reading participants' personal narratives and journal entries, as well as expressing my frustration when things were not going so well. The writing of this journal gave me insights to modify my interview guide as explained in the following section.

4.7.3      **Semi-structured interviews**

The interviews were carried out over a period of three weeks between November 16, 2009 and December 4, 2009. Before starting interviewing students, I went back to their classroom to give them a schedule so they could choose a date and time convenient for them. I reminded them that the interview could be done in the place of their choice; however, all of them decided to do the interview in my office. After the dates and times were set, I started interviewing students according to the following schedule:

**Table 4.0: Interview schedule**

NOV 16	NOV 17	NOV 18	NOV 19	NOV 20
11:00	11:00 <b>Esperanza</b>	11:00 <b>Aserina</b>	11:00 <b>Angie</b>	11:00 <b>Luna</b>
13:00 <b>Ricardo</b>	13:00	13:00	13:00 <b>Dayana</b>	13:00
NOV 23	NOV 24	NOV 25	NOV 26	NOV 27
11:00 <b>Angela</b>	11:00 <b>Angelica</b>	11:00 <b>Hanna</b>	11:00	11:00 <b>Kenya</b>
13:00	13:00 <b>Natalia</b>	13:00	13:00 <b>Isabel</b>	13:00
NOV 30	DEC 01	DEC 02	DEC 03	DEC 04
11:00 <b>Akira</b>	11:00 <b>David</b>	11:00 <b>Jimmy</b>	11:00	11:00 <b>Jaded</b>
13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00 <b>Jane</b>	13:00 <b>Enrique</b>

Due to my reflective journal writing during the first two stages of the data collection process, the interview guide was modified. At that stage, I was really surprised at students' responsibility, because it was something I did not expect as expressed in my reflective journal.

**RESEARCHER'S REFLECTIVE JOURNAL**

**03 NOV 2009**

It is interesting to read how students struggle to keep motivated. Although in their personal narratives most students declared a different orientation to becoming an English teacher... WHY do most of them feel so responsible to continue in the programme and obtain good results?

As a result of my ongoing reflection and questioning during the reading of the personal narratives and journal entries, I decided to include some questions to ask students what happened after a negative emotion was experienced, which emotion was the one that pushed them to act and do something beneficial for their language learning process, what their thinking about their emotions in their foreign language learning was before and after the project, how the classroom climate was and how their motivation could have been enhanced.

The interview stage started with me making some mistakes, as I was very nervous and anxious about getting the best information possible from participants, as expressed in my reflective journal.

#### **RESEARCHER'S REFLECTIVE JOURNAL**

**20 NOV 2009**

I started interviewing this week. It was really interesting to listen to students' experiences and start transcribing the first interview. I realised some mistakes I was making such as: talking too much, asking a leading question or losing concentration...

After realising these mistakes, I readjusted my technique in the following interviews in order to allow students to express their emotional experiences over the term.

### **4.8 Methods of data analysis**

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2008), data analysis is an ongoing process which includes reflection and questioning analytically. Although, there are no rigid rules or guidelines about how to do it, most qualitative researchers agree that it is precisely this feature that gives qualitative research its richness. According to Coffey and Atkinson (1996), 'There is no single right way to analyze qualitative data' (p. 2). For King (1994), having a set of rules

seems contradictory to the openness and flexibility that qualitative research professes. For Bloomberg and Volpe (2008), a set of conventions is not desirable since analysis in qualitative research is more an art than a science. Along the same lines, Huberman and Miles (2002) state that, '...qualitative analysis is a craft – one that carries its own disciplines' (p. 394). Walliman (2001) suggests that analysis procedures should fit the nature of the data generated. Thus, analysis cannot be prescribed since it has to match the purpose of the research and the type of data generated.

Some scholars advocate starting analysis at the early stages of data generation, as research is a cyclical process that needs to be informed constantly (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). For Bogdan and Biklen (2007), first-time researchers should leave formal analysis until most of the data has been generated because they are more likely to be immersed in other tasks, such as establishing rapport with participants. However, Bryman and Burgess (1994) state that '...analysis in qualitative research is continuous in that it interweaves with other aspects of the research process' (p. 218). Following this, I decided to start analysis from the early stages of the data generation process in order to familiarise myself better with my growing data corpus. After students wrote their personal narratives, I read and reread them in order to get a general understanding of their initial motivation development. In addition, after students sent their journal entries to me every week, I printed these out and read them, making notes and highlighting specific passages that attracted my attention. The transcription of interviews also gave me the time to familiarise myself with them and to get a general sense of the information provided by participants.

This study followed a Grounded Theory approach to analysis, which was first introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Grounded Theory is a strategy of analysis, which consists of a set of data collection and analytic procedures through which the researcher derives an abstract theory of a process, action or interaction from the views of the participants of a particular phenomenon (Charmaz, 2004; Creswell, 2009).

Since its introduction, the Grounded Theory approach has been applied by scholars in different fields of study, and due to this interpretations of the approach have diversified. Charmaz (2000) identifies two approaches to Grounded Theory: objectivist and constructivist Grounded Theory. The objectivist approach was first articulated by Glaser and Strauss (1967), in which an objective external reality and a neutral observer who discovers data are assumed. Later, the approach moved into post-positivism, proposing to give voice to participants and acknowledging that art and science are immersed in both the process and final product of Grounded Theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). This feature can be considered an advantage of Grounded Theory because it can be applied across a range of epistemological approaches. As suggested by Charmaz (2000), '...researchers can use these methods whether they are working from an objectivist or a constructivist perspective' (p. 510). However, there are certain characteristics that pertain to any of the variants of Grounded Theory: simultaneous data collection and analysis, pursuit of emergent themes through early data analysis, discovery of basic social processes within the data, inductive construction of abstract categories that explain and synthesise these processes, sampling to refine the categories through comparative processes, and integration of categories into a theoretical framework that specifies causes, conditions, and consequences of the studied process (Charmaz, 2001).

In this study, a constructivist approach to Grounded Theory was selected because through it 'The researcher aims to learn participants' implicit meanings of their experiences to build a conceptual analysis of them' (Charmaz 2001, p. 314). Thus, this method was selected as the most appropriate to analyse my research data since it allowed me to understand students' emotional experiences from their own perspective.

#### **4.9 Issues of trustworthiness**

In the same way that there is not a single way to analyse qualitative research, there is no set research design. The design followed in any piece of research is determined by its purpose or, as Cohen et al. (2000) put it, research design is governed by the notion of 'fitness for purpose' (p. 73). Consequently, there are no prescribed rules that can be applied to evaluate the quality of the diversity of qualitative studies in different areas.

The issues of reliability, replication and validity which are core to quantitative studies are considered inappropriate for qualitative research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). Thus, other issues need to be evaluated in a qualitative study. Ambert et al. (1995), for example, suggest that qualitative research can achieve quality through diverse ways, e.g. by providing new data, by giving voice to those not heard before, or by correcting biases in previous research. The positivist criteria terms of validity, reliability and objectivity have been rejected and new criteria in qualitative studies have emerged: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008).

Following Lincoln and Guba (1985), the concepts of reliability and replication are not of importance to my research purpose, since it is not focused on establishing that a measure is stable or on the replication of a particular concept or measure. My study within the qualitative paradigm is concerned with the meaning of emotions in students' foreign language learning process and with the effect students' emotions have on their motivational energy, if any. Thus, a different approach to demonstrating its quality was employed.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the criterion of *trustworthiness*, which includes four components mentioned previously: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. These are more suitable to assessing qualitative studies due to the diversity of approaches and to the different realities portrayed in them. These four components are guidelines to assess the quality of qualitative studies; however, not all of them will apply to the diversity of qualitative studies. Thus, it is important to cover those that apply to a particular study. Two components of trustworthiness, which seem appropriate for assuring the quality of my research aim, are those of credibility and dependability.

The *credibility* of the findings is a way to ensure the quality of a piece of research. Bryman (2008) suggests that to achieve this, research should be '...carried out according to the canons of good practice and submitting research findings to the members of the social world who were studied' (p. 377). In other words, participants of a study should validate the findings a researcher arrives at. Taking this into account, participants of this study were asked to confirm that the conclusions I drew from the information provided by them corresponded to the world they wanted to present to me. Participants were also asked to check transcripts of the interviews and edit their content if

desired. Although some participants did edit or add to the final interviews used for analysis, most students left them as transcribed by the researcher.

Another component of the concept of trustworthiness is that of *dependability*, which can be achieved by documenting the decisions and changes made during the research process, as well as having data that supports the conclusions (Mertens, 1998; Bryman, 2008). The study data were stored electronically so that they could be accessed if needed. The researcher also kept a journal during the data generation stage of the study in order to keep a record of any decisions made. The development of the study was also recorded electronically so that peers could audit the work undertaken during the different stages of this research.

Another criterion to ensure the quality of a study is triangulation, which involves the use of more than one method during the data generation stage (Mertens, 1998; Merriam, 2009). However, the term triangulation seems not to be comprehensive of the diversity of angles from which to look at a phenomenon, since it assumes that ‘...there is a ‘fixed point’ or an ‘object’ that can be triangulated’ (Richardson and Pierre, 2005, p. 963). Thus, a more wide-ranging approach is that of crystallisation, which ‘...recognizes that there are far more than “three sides” by which to approach the world’ (Richardson and Pierre, 2005, p. 963). This study was carried out using different methods and instruments for the generation of data: autoethnographies, semi-structured interviews, and students’ emotional journals, with the aim of seeing the same phenomenon from different angles.



#### **4.10 Summary**

In this chapter I have described the methodology used for this study. My research approach was introduced through a discussion of why I chose a qualitative approach as opposed to a quantitative one. I also outlined the research approach and data collection methods used in the data generation stage of the study. Finally, I described my approach to data analysis and the issues of trustworthiness. The following chapter presents an account of the study and the findings revealed by participants' emotional experiences.

## **Chapter 5**

# **An account of the emotional reactions experienced by Mexican English language learners in a university classroom**

### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the analysis of the data following the Grounded Theory approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). First, a detailed description of the analysis process is presented. Then, the themes revealed by participants' accounts of their affective experiences during language learning instruction will be introduced using the research questions as the framework for the presentation of findings.

### **5.1 Data analysis**

This study's data corpus is composed of 18 personal narratives, 325 journal entries and 18 interview transcripts. The personal narratives written by participants at the beginning of the data collection stage revealed information about students' initial motivation, which helped me to understand the doubts participants expressed during the journal writing stage of the study, and also helped me in the analysis of data. In addition, personal narratives added to the thick description presented in the following sections of the chapter. It is worth noting that my data corpus was all in Spanish since I believe that working with authentic texts led me to richer information. In the following sections, a

detailed description of the different stages of the Grounded Theory analysis process is presented.

### **5.1.1 Data analysis and interpretation using Grounded Theory**

As stated above, the analysis of data was carried out in line with Grounded Theory. This approach to analysis was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) to derive meaningful data-based categories in qualitative studies. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998) this type of approach to analysis helps to develop theories that '... are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding and provide a meaningful guide to action...' (p. 12).

A different, constructivist perspective on Grounded Theory is the one proposed by Charmaz (2000) in which '...reality arises from the interactive process and its temporal, cultural and structural contexts. Researcher and subjects frame that interaction and confer meaning upon it' (p. 524). A key tenet of constructivist Grounded theory is the flexibility it gives to researchers since its principles are not fixed rules but modifiable guidelines.

The core elements identified in the approach to analysis and interpretation have been covered in this study. Grounded Theory was selected as the analytic approach for this study in order to identify the influence of emotional experiences on foreign language motivation, based on participants' perceptions, because this approach can help to '...develop an abstract theoretical framework that explains the studied process' (Charmaz, 2001, p. 675). Through this approach to analysis I aim to present my interpretation of the emotional reactions experienced by Mexican foreign language learners, rather than an exact picture of them (Charmaz, 2000). In the following sections

I explain the stages followed in the development of the key themes revealed by participants, which consist of open coding, axial coding, and memoing and the integration of categories through a storyline.

**Table 5.0: Stages of analysis**

<b>Analysis stage 1</b>	18 personal narratives were read to understand the motivational events that led students to register in the ELT programme.
<b>Analysis stage 2</b>	<p>325 students' emotional journal entries were read by me over the 12 week period in order to identify the emotions experienced by students during classroom instruction.</p> <p>The journal entries were collapsed into three sets and imported to Nvivo 8 software to aide analysis of the study period (weeks 1-4; weeks 5-8; weeks 9-12).</p>
<b>Analysis stage 3</b>	18 interviews were transcribed and then analysed. I was able to verify that some patterns identified in the journals were also present in the final interviews.
<b>Analysis stage 4</b>	<p>Journal sets and interviews were analysed in Nvivo 8 software.</p> <p>Units of text were grouped together in analytic categories and given a tentative definition.</p> <p>Data was systematically reviewed to ensure that references under analytic categories supported these.</p> <p>Memoing was done during the analysis process and some memo themes emerged. Finally, a storyline was developed to integrate the analytic categories emerging from the study's data corpus.</p>

### **5.1.2 Open and axial coding**

The first stage of analysis was carried out during the data collection period in Mexico. First, 18 personal narratives were read carefully by me in an attempt to understand the motivations that had led students to register in the ELT programme. Second, 325 students' emotional journal entries were read by me over the 12 week period in order to identify the emotions experienced by

students during classroom instruction, what was causing these emotions and how the students were managing them. During this stage of analysis I made some comments and notes on the printed narratives and journal entries. Some patterns started to emerge which were further explored in the 18 interviews carried out at the end of term. Finally, while transcribing the interviews I was able to verify that some patterns identified in the journals were present in the final interviews.

Although some patterns started to emerge, I did not make a specific list at this stage because I only wanted to get a general understanding of participants' emotional experiences and how they were managing them. This allowed me to familiarise myself with my data corpus and to start asking questions about some of the events reported in participants' journals. As pointed out by Charmaz (2003), 'We should interact with our data and pose questions to them...' (p. 258).

Open coding started with importing the journal sets and interview data sets into Nvivo 8 software (QSR-International, 2007). Due to the extensiveness of the data they were separated for analysis; journals were collapsed into four-week periods to form three sets: weeks 1-4, weeks 5-9 and weeks 9-12. Interviews were imported into a different file in Nvivo 8. Data was carefully read to identify meaningful units of text relevant to the research foci. Units of text dealing with the same topic were grouped together in analytic categories and given a tentative definition. Some text units were included in more than one analytic category because of their relevance to more than one of them. Data was systematically reviewed to ensure that references under analytic categories supported these categories. During the reassessment of analytic categories some were collapsed and their titles refined. This process was

continually carried out during the entire stage of analysis. An example of the analytic categories can be seen below.

Figure 5.0: Sample of Nvivo output of free nodes

Free Nodes						
Name	Sources	Refer	Created	Created	Modified	Modified
learning English perceived as difficult	11	21	28/02/20	MGML	16/04/20	MGML
positive experiences with previous teachers	12	20	28/02/20	MGML	16/04/20	MGML
a collective responsibility	12	22	28/02/20	MGML	16/04/20	MGML
positive effects of positive emotions	12	14	28/02/20	MGML	16/04/20	MGML
comparisons with peers	12	32	28/02/20	MGML	22/04/20	MGML
self-efficacy feelings	12	16	01/03/20	MGML	16/04/20	MGML
unhumanistic teaching practices	12	36	19/03/20	MGML	22/04/20	MGML
teacher's feedback approach	13	49	28/02/20	MGML	22/04/20	MGML
affective strategies	13	22	01/03/20	MGML	22/04/20	MGML
teacher's attitude	13	40	01/03/20	MGML	22/04/20	MGML
afraid of making mistakes	14	46	28/02/20	MGML	16/04/20	MGML
poor class participation	14	62	28/02/20	MGML	16/04/20	MGML
exercising reflection	14	44	04/03/20	MGML	22/04/20	MGML
emotional self-regulation	15	35	28/02/20	MGML	16/04/20	MGML
self-encouragement	15	28	28/02/20	MGML	16/04/20	MGML
being an English teacher	15	26	28/02/20	MGML	16/04/20	MGML
turning negative emotions into motivational energy	15	44	06/03/20	MGML	16/04/20	MGML
emotional attributions	16	71	28/02/20	MGML	16/04/20	MGML
endurance of emotions	16	21	28/02/20	MGML	16/04/20	MGML
developing learning strategies	16	32	28/02/20	MGML	16/04/20	MGML
determination to succeed	16	37	28/02/20	MGML	16/04/20	MGML
positive effects of negative emotions	17	50	28/02/20	MGML	16/04/20	MGML
developing resilience	17	63	19/03/20	MGML	16/04/20	MGML

Axial coding comprised assigning different analytic categories to key themes. Although open and axial coding are described separately, the process is not a linear one. While carrying out open coding, connections between the different analytic categories are mentally made (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Analytic categories were grouped into key themes and rearranged through an exhaustive revision of concepts and definitions. Parallel to the process of open and axial coding, memo writing was being carried out by me. Memo writing is a crucial step in the analysis of data because it helps the researcher to test some ideas, refine categories and be creative about the relationships identified in data (Charmaz, 2001).

### 5.1.3 Memoing

According to Charmaz (2003), memo writing '...helps to spark our thinking and encourages us to look at our data and codes in new ways' (p. 261). It is through the process of constant questioning of our data and connecting different categories that we start to develop key themes in our analysis. Memos can help us to define codes or categories, to make comparisons between codes and categories, and to provide empirical evidence to support our category definitions (Charmaz, 2006). As mentioned above, I started to write memos when I imported the two data sets into Nvivo 8 software. I first started to write some ideas and thoughts that came to my mind while I was carrying out open coding. Later, these ideas were integrated into memo themes that were being revealed by participants' experiences. The following is an extract from a memo titled: *Fear as a paralysing force*.

Memo 2

April 6, 2010

#### **Fear as a paralysing force**

This is a concept which originated during the process of refining coding and concepts in data analysis. In students' journal entries there were numerous references to being afraid to speak in English. As I was reviewing the references for this code, I encountered many instances of students describing how, in spite of wanting to participate, the fear of being corrected by the teacher paralysed them and constrained them, although they recognised that by not participating in class they were missing a great opportunity to continue developing their oral ability. Later, when coding students' interviews, I encountered some students' references about being afraid of the teacher, and by going back to students' journal entries I could verify that in a number of references this fear originated because the students were afraid of the teacher. Thus, this outcome of fear was hindering students' learning process since it promoted insecurity, diminished feelings of self-efficacy, and led to a lack of group cohesion, poor class participation and consequently a very negative environment that seems to have deteriorated day after day, making students switch off from class activities. It seems that students' insecurity developed because they perceived the teacher's feedback approach to be judgmental.

Memo writing helped me to refine my codes' names and descriptions. I found this step in the process of analysis a very helpful tool to start thinking about how to make connections between the different categories I considered relevant to be included in the final presentation of results. The presentation of results is not based on the number of references in the different categories identified in the coding stage of analysis, but in the story that I believe explains students' high motivation energy maintenance during the term. As suggested by Charmaz (2001), 'The constructivist approach leans toward a story because it rests on an interpretive frame' (p. 691). Thus, in the following section the process of the integration of categories into a coherent storyline is explained.

#### 5.1.4 Building theory through integration of categories

This stage of research followed the open and axial coding phases of the analysis process. Memo writing allowed me to organise my thinking and to develop some of the emergent ideas revealed by participants' accounts of emotional experiences. From the interview data set, 53 analytic categories emerged, clustered under seven key themes, and from the journal data set 46 analytic categories were clustered under six key themes (see Appendix G).

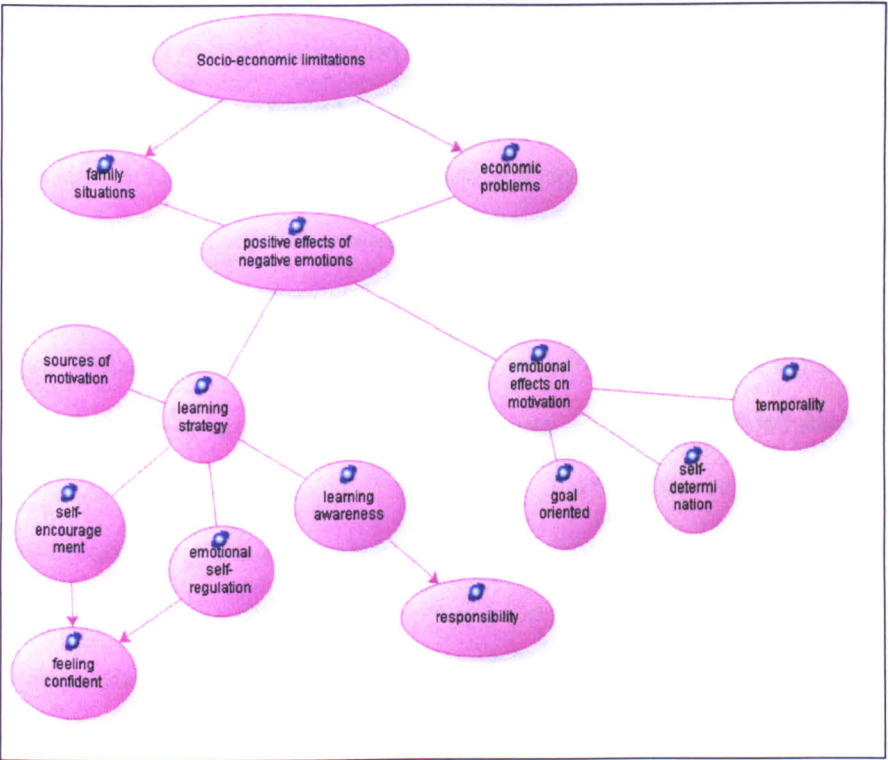
**Table 5.1: Analytic categories**

Interview data set key themes	Journal data set key themes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Emotions experienced</li> <li>2. Perceived causes of emotional reactions</li> <li>3. Effects of emotional reactions</li> <li>4. Sources of motivation</li> <li>5. Critical incidents</li> <li>6. Motivational responsibility</li> <li>7. Outcomes of participation in research</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Emotions experienced</li> <li>2. Perceived causes of emotional reactions</li> <li>3. Effects of emotional reactions</li> <li>4. Sources of motivation</li> <li>5. The teacher's impact</li> <li>6. Critical incidents</li> </ol>



In order to begin the integration of categories it is necessary to decide on a 'central' or 'core' category which represents the main theme of the research (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). To decide on a core category, I made different diagrams in which categories were clustered to see the relevance of the analytic categories grouped around a specific theme.

**Figure 5.1: Sample of Nvivo output model of positive effects of negative emotions**



According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), researchers should decide on the category that appears to have the greatest explanatory relevance and highest potential for linking all of the other categories together. Having decided on the core theme, ***positive effects of negative emotions***, I wrote a storyline to integrate all my analytic categories under the main theme to explain the

meaning study participants gave to the emotional experiences faced in their foreign language learning classes (see Appendix H).

Qualitative analysis is an enigma for novice researchers, since there are no straightforward guidelines to follow. It is argued that the mystery around qualitative research analysis is the feature that gives the approach its richness (King, 1994; Bloomberg and Volpe, 2008). For me, carrying out the analysis and trying to report its results was one the most frustrating stages of my research process. Although there are some guidelines on how to go about analysis, I found no suggestions on ways to present my study's results. I had a very difficult time trying to find a way to present my data. I reviewed different theses in order to find a model that might suit my results, but I could not find one to follow. As well as analysis needing to fit the nature of the data generated (Walliman, 2001), I realised that the presentation of results is a unique process. I wrote three drafts before I felt that my presentation of findings was more or less clear for my readers. How could I illustrate all my research findings in a chapter? How could I show my readers that my research questions were answered by the data generated? How could I make my research findings clear without showing the overlapping of themes? It was a time-consuming and difficult task. My main concern was to make my chapter clear and reader-friendly. I started to write a story in which the most representative emotional events described by my participants could be presented, but it was lengthy so I deleted it. I then decided to focus on different students to show the diversity of experiences, but again the words went beyond the limits. At this point, I was not only frustrated but also angry, because I had taken a lot of time and effort over this process. In addition, I realised that I had only focused on some students and felt that this was not what I wanted to do. Furthermore, my previous attempts may have threatened

the confidentiality of my participants because students might have been recognisable in my narrative. I wanted to tell a collective story, not to focus on individual experiences (Charmaz, 2001), so I decided to select those themes in the storyline I had developed while doing the memos that could offer a tentative answer to my research questions. Thus, in the following sections of this chapter the themes derived from the affective experiences of Mexican language learners will be introduced after each research question to show how they fit into these questions. However, I would like to highlight the fact that, even though it is presented in a structured way, the analysis was not linear, but messy and characterised by the overlapping of themes. Thus some themes may be reflected in more than one of the following sections.

## **5.2 Emotional experiences of English language learners and their impact on motivation**

The main purpose of this study was to understand how affective experiences impact on Mexican students' motivation to learn English as a foreign language. In order to address this research question, the following three sub-questions were elaborated:

- a) How does affective experience manifest itself?
- b) What factors influence the nature of such experiences?
- c) How is motivation connected to affective experience?

The following sections of this chapter will address the main research question and the three sub-questions. Themes revealed in the data analysis stage will be presented after each question in order to show how they fit into them.

Thus, the main question is presented in Section 5.2.1 and the sub-questions are then introduced in Sections 5.2.2, 5.2.3 and 5.2.4.

### **5.2.1 Main research question**

- 1. How do EFL learners' affective experiences in the foreign language classroom in a Mexican university impact on their motivation to learn English?**

Students revealed that their motivation was affected in two ways: negatively and positively. The emotion most often reported by students was fear in relation to the teacher's feedback approach, non-verbal communication and attitude; this negative emotion led them to become paralysed and minimised their interaction in class. Students remained silent when the teacher was near them or decided not to participate in class activities. Due to this, students' insecurity increased since they were not experiencing any improvement in ability. Students feared making mistakes because of the teacher's feedback and also because it resulted in their peers mocking them. However, fear pushed them to look for solutions to be better prepared for future oral participation. Thus, fear had two effects on students' motivation: fear as a paralysing force and fear as a motivational force. These two outcomes of fear are explained in detail below.

#### **5.2.1.1 Fear as a paralysing force**

Students reported they feared speaking in English over the 12-week period of the study. In spite of wanting to participate, the fear of being corrected by the teacher paralysed students and constrained them. Students recognised that, by not participating in class, they were missing a great opportunity to continue developing their oral ability. Students were afraid of the teacher mostly because they feared the teacher's feedback approach, which appeared to be

judgmental and non-informational (Dörnyei, 1994). Students perceived the teacher's feedback as quite harsh, as expressed below:

...not only me but many got to a stage in which we did not want to participate...we feared the teacher did not like our work ...then we noticed she started to be weird...er...more rude, more demanding and we all didn't feel the same in class. [JADED – INTERVIEW]

..sometimes insecurity because I do get nervous when I am at the front...yes...I think it is insecurity of making a mistake or mispronouncing a word and being scolded by the teacher because I am afraid of her...(nervous laugh). [NATALIA-INTERVIEW]

This feeling was shared by most (14) of the students in the group, as reported in journal entries:

Almost no one wants to participate, the teacher has to call our names when doing an activity because it is really rare that someone volunteers to read dialogues, small texts, or answer exercises aloud. [ANGIE-JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

Due to the teacher's way of providing feedback, students' insecurity increased as they experienced diminishing feelings of self-efficacy when attempting to participate. These feelings led them to start questioning if they were doing things correctly or not. Their insecurity is described in the following reference:

It really affected me ...these days we have had more homework and I keep on questioning myself when writing... and in fact it is not helping me ...because as I am writing, I am also thinking about it being coherent or not and I end up writing senseless things. [JANE-JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

Most (12) students' participation was constrained by this fear. Students were not only afraid of the teacher's feedback but also of their peers mocking them as a result of this feedback.

Because we all make mistakes... well...up to now they have not made fun of me. But on certain occasions they have been making fun of other classmates. I feel these classmates are intimidated and they feel like not wanting to speak again. I feel like that would happen to me...if they made fun of me I would not feel like wanting to participate in class...I would feel like doing nothing because of the fear of my peers making fun of me again. [AKIRA-JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

Due to the students' fears, they did not feel comfortable and an ineffective learning environment developed. Most (15) students reported feeling inhibited by some of the teacher's gestures when correcting them, which contributed to increasing their reticence to take part in class activities. Students' insecurity grew as a consequence of not feeling confident to interact in class.

I honestly say that when I go into the classroom...I am someone different....someone who doesn't feel comfortable because I feel insecure...and I am not the only one, but the fact of feeling this way....it really affects me. [RICARDO – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

Students' poor participation continued for the whole term because their feelings towards the teacher were validated by other negative experiences students reported in journals, including the teacher's non-verbal communication when they made mistakes or arrived late, her abrupt ending of communication when they wanted to talk to her, and the students' realisation that a teacher in another class was exercising a humanistic approach in which students felt comfortable, were willing to participate, dared to make mistakes and, most importantly, their marks were not as low as with teacher 1. Being afraid of the teacher proved to have a very negative effect on students' motivation. However, being afraid of their peers' mockery had, in contrast, a

positive influence on students' motivation (eustress), as reported in the following section.

#### **5.2.1.2 Fear as a motivating force**

Fear was a constant emotion experienced by this group of students. The fear of making mistakes or mispronouncing a word was present from the very first week. Most (10) students did not understand the teacher completely and this added to their fears:

...sometimes I find difficult to talk in class....and more when I realised there were more advanced students in the group...and sometimes I do not understand everything the teacher says, only parts. I find it really difficult to express myself and I am afraid of them (*referring to her peers*) making fun of me because of my pronunciation or an incorrect sentence. [ASERINA – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

Most (14) students reported being aware of their peers' mockery when mispronouncing a word or not being able to complete a sentence. The constant mocking led students to start making comparisons with their peers in class activities, as revealed by students' journals:

Sometimes I do not understand what they say...or I listen to others who speak English really well...I think someday I will be able to talk like them but meanwhile I feel really impotent at not being able to speak like that. [KENYA – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

I realised that I am not the one who knows least in class; I mean I can perform better than some of my classmates. For Ximena it is more difficult to talk in class than for me...she finds it really difficult to structure a phrase or a sentence. [NATALIA – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

This constant comparison between students pushed them to look for ways to improve their language proficiency. The mocking negative experiences fostered in students learning awareness, learning strategies and motivational strategies. Most (15) students realised that language learning needed the investment of time and effort in order to be successful. Students started to think about how to make their language learning process an effective one, as reported by some study participants:

This event made me realise that Memo speaks fluently because he has studied for many years...I decided to study more... to learn English and someday I will be able to express myself as fluently as him. [JIMMY – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

I decided to register in a conversation course in order to improve my oral ability. [ISABEL – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

This weekend I am going to stick a foam ball to a piece of paper with the verbs I have to review in my room so I can repeat them...and then I can do all the rest....[ANGIE – JOURNAL/ Weeks 5-8]

Students' awareness led them to diversify their language learning approach. Some students (14) undertook reflection after a negative event in which they made an evaluation of the negative event and their motivational sources. This reflection allowed them to think of solutions which transformed into learning strategies. Most (17) of them reported making use of affective, cognitive, communicative, compensation, metacognitive and social strategies in order to help them overcome similar events in future classes:

I try to put myself into situations that help me to overcome the fear of speaking in class... well...I go to mass and...there...I sometimes go to the front to read a Bible passage...and yes...I try to do it frequently to see how my confidence is evolving (*laughs*)...and yes it is going...more or less...I am getting there. [NATALIA – INTERVIEW]



Not to hurry to look up the words in the dictionary and try to understand the story by the context. ([KENYA – JOURNAL/ Weeks 5-8])

Well... I asked a student from the last semester to help me review my pronunciation for the oral exam. [ESPERANZA – JOURNAL/ Weeks 5-8]

Besides learning strategies, students started to develop motivational strategies so they could cope with the demands of their foreign language learning process. The negative emotions experienced were short-lived since, after a period of reflection, students reenergised themselves to continue with their learning of English. Students recognised in interviews that emotions had been important for the maintenance of their language learning motivation. Although they considered that both positive and negative emotions were important, they realised that the negative emotions were the ones that pushed them to look for ways to improve their language learning process. Students agreed that their motivation had ups and downs. However, they all (18) considered that a negative event was not going to 'destroy' them. Thus, negative emotions had a positive effect on students' motivation because after experiencing one, students engaged in reflection that led them to develop motivational strategies. These helped them to try again and continue in the ELT programme. Students started to exercise emotional self-regulation, as all (18) reported:

I repressed the negative emotion and started to think in a positive way. [ASERINA – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

Well... I always try to calm down when I am going to present an oral exam because I do not want to allow nervousness to take over. [ISABEL – INTERVIEW]

The following example shows how one student managed to turn an extremely embarrassing event (for him) into a more positive outcome:

Jimmy was from a nearby town and had reported feeling lonely and missing his family, especially his mother. After a weekend with his family in his rural community, he took the bus to the city in order to arrive on time for his English class at 7am. During the journey, the bus made a short stop because of a mechanical problem and Jimmy was late for class. The teacher only allowed students to go into the classroom from 7:00am to 7:10am. After this time she usually closed the door and only allowed students in at her discretion.

The Mayche University is in the Mexican Caribbean where hot weather makes the pace of life a slow one. Time for Mayche inhabitants is not a problem and punctuality is not among their concerns. I learned this after some years living there. Mayche inhabitants are used to resting, and take a nap after lunchtime, which is around 2:00pm. This tradition obliges high street stores to close from 2:00pm to 6:00pm. Students' punctuality is a problem for teachers and students find it difficult to be on time, particularly for the early morning classes.

Jimmy travelled to university feeling sad about leaving his mother alone and worried because he had to be on time for class. On arrival at the classroom door, Jimmy was told something by the teacher, but he did not understand. The teacher repeated it but he still did not understand. At this point Jimmy felt very embarrassed because all his classmates were staring at him, and sad because he was not able to understand a simple order from the teacher. Jimmy felt so upset that he reported this event in the third person, wishing to take his distance from it, as expressed in his narration:

Jimmy wanted to run away from the classroom and forget about learning English (his motivation diminished)...why was he not able to catch such simple words? The day was dreadful...the bus was late, he arrived late for class and he ended up feeling ashamed in front of his classmates. [JIMMY – JOURNAL/ Weeks 5-8]

This was not the only embarrassing moment Jimmy experienced in class because of his lack of comprehension. In a later event, all his partners in a group discussion burst out laughing when he mispronounced a word. However, reflection led him to self-encouragement and reenergised his motivation, as stated:

I did not want to participate for the rest of the class and what I did immediately after class was... I went to the bathroom and looked at myself in the mirror and asked myself: is it worth it to put your head down? I answered myself NO...there was a change in my motivation after talking to myself in the bathroom. [JIMMY – JOURNAL/ Weeks 9-12]

A growing awareness of control and commitment led students to assume greater responsibility in their learning process, as expressed by some (11) students:

This week I have to admit I did not feel motivated at all. I feel I am really not organised and I need to order my ideas and study hours. If I can spend all those hours browsing the web and watching television I should also dedicate time to study...[JADED – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

I had taken the decision to quit my job because maybe it was taking most of my time...but then I decided to analyse my priorities because, after all, it is not my job....it is me because I sometimes feel that I use my job as an excuse not to carry on with my studies as I should. [ASERINA – JOURNAL/ Weeks 5-8]

The process revealed by students' negative experiences is extremely interesting because the negative experiences led to two different outcomes, as explained in this section. Although some (15) students felt paralysed in class, most of them (17) decided to take an active role in their learning process and to develop strategies to make it more effective. These results lead to Finding Number One, which is divided into two:

- 1a) Negative emotions originated by the teacher provoked students to become paralysed during classroom instruction and diminished their motivation.**
  
- 1b) Negative emotions originated by peers made students aware of their responsibility in the process of learning a foreign language and forced them to develop learning and motivational strategies to overcome negative emotions.**

### **5.2.2 First research sub question**

#### **1a. How does affective experience manifest itself?**

Affective experience in this study manifested itself mainly in fear. Students reported not understanding the teacher in the first weeks of the term and finding it difficult to express themselves in English. Students feared making mistakes because of the teacher's corrections and the reaction they usually caused in their classmates. Students' participation in class decreased significantly in order to avoid the teacher's feedback and peers' mocking. As a result of this, an ineffective language learning environment was created.

### **5.2.2.1 An ineffective language learning environment engendered through fear**

The fear of being corrected by the teacher was caused by the grading system exercised by the teacher. When students received feedback from their first writing task, the environment changed completely for some (eight) students. This event happened in the fourth week of the term; students had just had three weeks of classes with Teacher 1 and were adjusting to her teaching and classroom management style. Students expressed finding it difficult to adapt to their new teacher and some (five) were missing their previous teacher, as reported by Ricardo:

The truth is that my English class is wonderful, but when talking with my close friends we expressed that in spite of the teacher being really good, we missed our first course teacher...it may be because when time has passed you trust someone more and you get used to his techniques or teaching style. [RICARDO-JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

Students were in the process of adjusting to the teacher but the process stopped abruptly when they received the feedback from their first writing task. Some (eight) referred to the event as shocking, unbelievable and disturbing. Their feelings of adjustment to the new teacher stopped after this event and their motivation decreased, as stated by Enrique:

She made me feel frustrated...because in the writing task she marked it with a five in spite of my grammar being correct. She only gave me that mark because I wrote I instead of I ...since then my motivation decreased. [ENRIQUE-INTERVIEW]

Others considered the event a revealing experience that made them all (18) feel insecure and frightened of future assessment in class activities, homework or examinations, as stated by Jaded:

If I was feeling OK about my development in class – this week made me feel really down. This was because of a writing task...we all felt that our work was not perfect but good. However, we realised it wasn't. It was completely frustrating and shocking knowing the very low marks we were given by the teacher. This emotion of disappointment has marked the whole class and not only me. The teacher's marking was really harsh and I think this has made us all feel really frightened. [JADED-JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

This feedback incident made Jaded very sad and reluctant to participate in class unless forced by the teacher. Jaded registered in the ELT programme in spite of wanting to study medicine because of her parents' pressure; this contributed to her feeling insecure and doubtful about her language learning abilities. She became very depressed about her mark and worried about how to get better marks in the future. As the ELT programme was not her first choice to study at the Mayche University she felt doubtful about staying in the degree, as revealed in her journal entry:

...the other day our first writing task was returned and nobody thought that it would be marked with such low marks; I think the highest mark was a six. We all felt really low, even me. I feel the whole group felt really bad about this. I think I am somehow disappointed, I know I am not that good at English, but I have never got such a low mark. This mark really made me feel bad and has made me wonder if this degree is the correct one for me. [JADED-JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

Some (10) students reported having very good grades in previous academic years and therefore facing a very low mark was shocking for them.

### **Feeling insecure**

Students felt insecure about their pronunciation, lack of vocabulary, grammar and ability to learn English. The presence of high proficiency students in the group made this insecurity increase, as expressed by Esperanza:

I had an oral presentation and I thought, 'I don't want that guy to come'. I feel intimidated when he is in the class because I think he is going to say something...someone told me he criticises and makes fun of the rest of the class...so I now feel frightened even in oral exams because I don't want to take it with him because besides being beaten by him he is going to make fun of me and that is my fear.  
[ESPERANZA – INTERVIEW]

Insecurity and fear of peers mocking led students not only to stop their participation in class but also added stress to course activities such as oral examinations. This contributed to diminishing students' self-concepts of competence since they did not have space for participation and consequently no improvement was experienced.

### **Poor class participation**

Most (15) students expressed their fear of speaking in class was because of their pronunciation or lack of vocabulary. The teacher's feedback approach did not help them to overcome this fear. Instead, it deepened their fear and constrained them from participating in class, as reported by some:

In Teacher 1's class...many do not want to participate in her class... maybe because they are afraid that when they participate she is going to give them a very low mark. [AKIRA-JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

My participations in class are very brief and I only do it when I am asked. [JANE- JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

Showing a very poor English language performance in class activities was a constant fear during the whole period of the course. The gestures the teacher used when students took part in class tasks made learners inhibited. Consequently they avoided participating in class:

Most of all fear...fear to speak, fear to participate in class when the teacher asks for it. I preferred to remain silent... or if she calls your name out then you feel obliged to do it but never voluntarily...fear.  
[ANGIE- JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

As revealed by students, affective experience manifested through fear. Although they also experienced positive and other negative experiences, students expressed in interviews that fear was the pervasive emotion they experienced the most during the term.

### **Non-humanistic teaching practices**

It is interesting to highlight that most students recognised in journal entries that Teacher 1 was a very good teacher. They emphasised when referring to feelings about her class that these negative feelings were not about the teacher's professional abilities but her interpersonal ones. This is a very important point revealed by students' emotional accounts because they recognised that the teacher was well-prepared and tried to do her work in the best possible way; as stated by some (three) of the students with reference to some of her teaching activities:

I felt happy because the teacher made us do a lot of group activities. We all participated and made small conversations and it was easy. Everyone in the group helped each other so it could be accurate. [HANNA – INTERVIEW]

However, the teacher's way of being made a great impact on students' motivation in daily classes, as students expressed repeatedly being reluctant to become involved in class because of her oral feedback approach.



The teacher who gave us the class is very good “at her job” although her temper is not that good. When someone makes a mistake, she corrects us in a not very good way, she looks angry. That is why nobody participates in class...because we all are afraid of being scolded. [NATALIA – INTERVIEW]

The teacher's way of being caused students not to open up in her class. Students perceived the teacher was not being authentic. They felt the teacher was acting when trying to show a caring attitude. Although the teacher tried to engage this group of students, her way of being did not help her:

Teachers have an influence because if a teacher is apathetic or gives you a look of disapproval... they don't inspire confidence to learn and you feel really embarrassed because you think your classmates are criticising you and the teacher is also doing it. [ASERINA – INTERVIEW]

Students' previous experiences with other teachers made them react very negatively towards Teacher 1. Some (13) students considered a teacher's attitude to be really important in a classroom because the acceptance or rejection of a teacher depends on this:

Well, for the few I have known...um, my previous teacher...er... I trusted her because she used to laugh but you felt her laugh was natural...you felt she was sincere and this teacher (*referring to Teacher 1*)...well...I like her....but you feel like she is not giving you confidence...like you are afraid....like she is judging you...[ESPERANZA- INTERVIEW]

I consider that the emotions teachers show you in class are fundamental...these greatly influence students directly and indirectly...in a few words...it could lead to the acceptance or rejection of a teacher. [RICARDO – JOURNAL/ Weeks 5-8]

Students' negative experiences with Teacher 1 led them to start making comparisons with another teacher they were having classes with. Some students missed their previous teachers but most of them (17) realised that in another class the environment was different.

### **Comparing teaching approaches**

Students felt different with Teacher 2 because they perceived her as genuinely interested in their learning and personal problems. They felt confident and trusted her which made them willing to participate in class activities, as expressed by most (17) students in the group:

Well...Teacher 2 gives you security, confidence and this has helped me a lot because I participate all the time in her class...she always asks everyone in the group without making any exceptions. Whereas other teachers....er.....Teacher 2 gives you the confidence to participate without feeling you are being judged. [ASERINA – INTERVIEW]

I as a student got really stressed in all her classes (*referring to Teacher 1*). There was another class with Teacher 2 and in this class, we all participated...you can feel no tension in the environment and everything just flows. Teacher 2 made everyone participate without showing you up when you made a mistake. [ENRIQUE – INTERVIEW]

Teacher 1's good professional abilities were erased because of her interpersonal ones. More than anything, students resented the feedback approach the teacher exercised with them. It made them feel humiliated and, consequently, nobody wanted to be exposed in class:

I don't know...I was never reprimanded but I remember it was done to someone else. I feel it was really cutting, sharp what she told him...I felt really bad for him...it was not addressed to me but it made me feel really uncomfortable...I felt really embarrassed to witness Teacher 1 saying that to this classmate.[ANGIE – INTERVIEW]

The environment in Teacher 1's class proved to be very ineffective for students' confidence. Most (14) students reacted negatively to Teacher 1's attitude and feedback approach. Students realised that the atmosphere in another class was the opposite of the one experienced in Teacher 1's class.

### **Positive learning environment**

The classroom atmosphere created by Teacher 2 made students feel confident so they actively interacted in her class. Teacher 2 created an environment conducive to learning by exercising a humanistic approach, as revealed by students:

...but Teacher 2 gives you confidence when you participate, and when you make a mistake she tells you but in a delicate way...she does not make it seem like mockery...I feel this has helped us a lot because the whole group does participate with her and when we do something wrong she always tries to make us notice it in the very best way, or sometimes she waits till the end of class and talks to us individually and gives us personalised feedback in which she always encourages us to try to improve those areas we are not so good at...and always tells us that we can do it....she always encourages us. [ASERINA – INTERVIEW]

The types of activities and the relationship Teacher 2 developed with students made them trust her. These two aspects contributed to motivating students, as reported in their journal entries:

...thanks to the help of Teacher 2 my emotional state improved...she showed interest in my situation...she asked how I felt and I was so touched by her attitude...this motivates me to make my best effort in her class. [ENRIQUE – JOURNAL/ Weeks 5-8]

The humanistic approach Teacher 2 was exercising encouraged students to be actively involved in her class. By participating in class activities, students experienced positive emotions. These positive experiences with Teacher 2

allowed students to develop feelings of self-efficacy. These self-efficacy feelings allowed students to reenergise with positive motivational energy when they were experiencing some negative situations in class with Teacher 1.

### **Reloading their motivational energy**

Students' disposition after an activity that they enjoyed and perceived as beneficial for the integration of the group increased their motivation, as reported by some (nine) students:

Oral presentations and games help you to be motivated because you interact with your classmates...even though I am fearful and in a panic...yes, in which we all...students and the teacher get together...to have that affective bond between the teacher and students. [KENYA –INTERVIEW]

Learning activities that students were able to accomplish with a certain level of success motivated students after they experienced feelings of self-efficacy. Students considered these as proof of their capability to speak fluent English in the future. These steps in the advancement of their language learning process served the purpose of reloading their motivational energy to continue in the degree as a means to fulfil their goals, as reported by students:

...this emotion has positive outcomes...everything happens because of something and with every emotion I experience...I become stronger and with more will to continue and be able to achieve my goals. [LUNA – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

This makes me feel more confident and motivates me to continue learning new things...to know more about it...I can overcome the challenge. [HANNA – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

As reported, self-efficacy feelings after a learning activity carried out with a degree of success helped students to reload their motivational energy. The experience of learning activities in which students were able to interact with classmates in a non- threatening environment allowed them to experience success. This was very important for the motivation maintenance of learners and combined with the Mexican context to keep this group of students positively motivated during the whole term. The importance of a teacher's interpersonal skills as a powerful source of motivation was highlighted by all students in this study. These conclusions led to Finding Number Two, which is divided into two:

**2a) The influence of teachers' interpersonal skills on foreign language learners' motivation was considered to be paramount to the maintenance and development of students' motivation.**

**2b) Teachers as leaders in a classroom have the responsibility to create a positive learning environment conducive to effective learning.**

### **5.2.3 Second research sub-question**

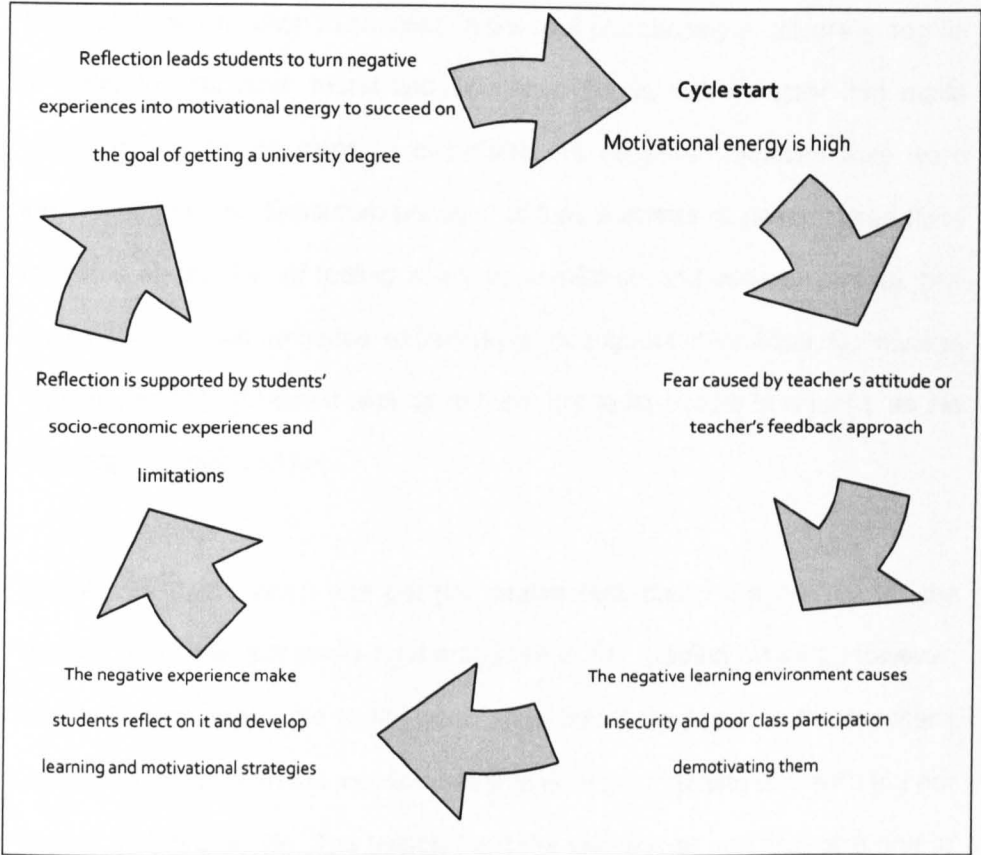
#### **1b. What factors influence the nature of such experience(s)?**

*Affective experiences in this particular group of learners were influenced by the socio-cultural context of the students. The particular context in which this study was carried out empowered students to turn negative affective experiences they were going through into positive motivational energy.*

#### **5.2.3.1 Turning negative emotions into motivational energy**

Students in this study were from two different Mexican backgrounds: urban and rural. The students' backgrounds were powerful determinants on the way students embraced negative affective experiences in their language learning process. Of the 18 students that participated in the study, 12 were from a city background and six from nearby rural towns. Although from different backgrounds, students shared the same socio-economic class, except for Jaded and David. Jaded was from a middle-class family, and David had just come down the economic ladder because his father was suffering from a serious disease. David's father was the only support for his family so David was experiencing economic pressures for the first time in his life. This was difficult for him, being used to having all his basic needs covered, as well as some luxuries. He was now not even able to pay for the bus to go to university, make photocopies or buy the textbooks required for his classes. Thus, some (eight) students were not only struggling to grasp the English language but also trying to manage economic pressures.

**Figure 5.2: Turning negative emotions into motivational energy cycle**



The reflection process was supported by the diverse sources of motivation students expressed in the following different analytic categories: determination to succeed, having economic limitations, commitment to parents, the cultural value of education, experiencing difficult family situations, getting a university degree, and securing a better economic future.

SOURCES OF MOTIVATION	N	R
Determination to succeed	18	84
Having economic limitations	8	37
Experiencing difficult family situations	6	33
Commitment to parents	12	21
Cultural value of education	7	14
Getting a university degree	5	11
Securing a better economic future	6	11

### **Determination to succeed**

Students' determination to succeed in the task of obtaining a university degree in order to fulfil other moral and economic needs was a factor that made students look for solutions to overcome the negative emotions they were experiencing in the classroom because of their teachers or peers. Some (five) reflected on the fact of feeling angry or humiliated and considered that they may have to face negative experiences throughout their lives for diverse reasons, so thought that it was up to them not to let people hurt them, as the following examples show:

Kenya was angry when she got her writing task back; she considered the teacher had been extremely rigid and strict in her grading system. However, after reflection she came to the conclusion that it may just be the teacher's style and that she had to learn to cope with different teaching styles during her degree and later in life. The lesson from the experience was that she had to learn not to allow anyone to make her feel bad, as expressed in the interview at the end of the term:

...but sometimes I forget that it is up to me to allow those experiences to make me feel bad....I allowed other people to influence me...I know it should not be like that but sometimes you unconsciously let them do it...well, sometimes some people's opinions....teachers for example and even peers....as I have already said, you realise some classmates are more proficient and then you....you start to feel less....start to tell to yourself 'um, no I can't and this and that'.....and yes, but more than anything teachers. [KENYA – INTERVIEW]

Ricardo reacted very strongly towards the teacher after receiving the writing feedback. He felt angry, frustrated and even hateful. He is a highly motivated student who previously seemed to always make his best effort and always get good marks. This experience marked his attitude towards the teacher since, in



his words, he was no longer able to act in the same way in class; he felt different and uncomfortable while in class with Teacher 1. The experience made him realise that:

..in our life we are going to be in contact with negative experiences and we learn from them...what I mean is that negative experiences always give us a positive lesson that can help us forever...because of that I have decided to take from negative experiences what can be beneficial for me and discard what is damaging for me.  
[RICARDO – JOURNAL/ Weeks 9-12]

### **Having economic limitations**

Some (eight) students were experiencing economic pressures during the term. These students attributed their lack of concentration in class to these financial worries.

I was lying in bed and started to think about what had happened in the class...Why had I not understood what the teacher said to me?....Then I recalled I had been thinking about the economic pressures my family is facing since I woke up. [JIMMY – JOURNAL/ Weeks 5-8]

For some students, experiencing economic pressures was not new. However, for David it was something new: he had been supposed to go to a private university instead of the state university. However, a sudden serious illness had put his father in bed without being able to continue with his work. David's father had been self-employed and did not have any savings or insurance to help his family during this difficult period. However, in spite of the economic pressures David was facing, he was able to transform this negative situation into positive emotional energy, as expressed:

...because of the economic pressures my family is going through it is difficult for me sometimes to go to classes, photocopy materials or chapters that teachers asked us. It may sound weird but this inspires me and gives me the strength to continue. [DAVID – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

### **Experiencing difficult family situations**

Many students came from a low socio-economic background and this led some to experience difficult family situations in which constant fights and lack of communication with their parents made them use the English classroom as a way to escape from their other reality and to make their best efforts to concentrate in class. This particular situation made some (eight) students see the completion of the degree as a way to solve all the family problems they were experiencing.

I am from a very small town where most people do not have the opportunity to study...women are supposed to get married... and they are beaten... my brothers are working in the north and my sister is married. I was the only one living with my parents so I decided to study but I have to work because my parents can't support my studies...I am the only one who can help them in the future. [ANGELICA – INTERVIEW]

The lack of financial resources in these families was a source of constant fights and some students needed to work in order to support themselves. Some students (eight) attributed their lack of concentration and effort in class to the lack of rest due to their working responsibilities, or to feeling sad because of family fights:

In my house, my mummy came home from work very upset and started to fight with my dad because of the lack of money, they were shouting in a very unpleasant manner. Then my sister didn't come home to sleep...when I woke up, I realised she was not in her bed and this made me really sad...because of all that I was

very depressed in class and I didn't understand anything the teacher was saying...the truth is that thanks to all this fighting at home, because of the scarcity of money... it motivates me to continue studying so when I finish I do not have to depend on my parents and can go away from here. [DAYANA – JOURNAL /Weeks 1-4]

### **Commitment to parents**

Mexican society revolves around family values, which are usually preserved by mothers and relatives. Events concerning any members of a family are shared on Sunday afternoons when whole families gather to eat and be updated on family news. When some family members do not live in the same city they are usually informed about the different family situations by grandmothers, who have the leading role in most families in Mexico.

From a very young age Mexicans learn to develop special bonds with their cousins, uncles, aunts and especially their grandparents. Some family members' decisions are collectively discussed and final decisions are reached by a consensus. Thus, a commitment to parents is something most Mexicans grow up with. In the past, the oldest brother was the one who was supposed to help parents financially, while the youngest daughter was the one in charge of taking care of them. However, changes in family structures have left this commitment to whomever is available. Although in some families this may not be encouraged, most families in Mexico value respect and responsibility towards the elderly. Thus, it is not surprising that during this period of their lives these students considered that their success in obtaining a degree was going to contribute to fulfilling the moral responsibility they had towards their families, as stated by some (12) students:

...well...yes...sometimes I thought about my emotions....and I kept on telling myself 'you have to study'...and also because of my parents who are away....and we do not have a good economic level...if I finish the degree I will be able to help them to have a better life...that motivates me greatly. [HANNA – INTERVIEW]

What motivates me the most is the love for my parents...we are a very poor family from a rural town, my parents cannot support my university studies...my brothers didn't have the chance to study...our parents could not support my siblings after preparatory school so my sister got married and my brothers emigrated to work...so I am the only one who is going to be able to help them in the future. [ANGELICA – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

The moral responsibility towards parents and the elder family members in Mexican culture proved to be a great determinant of students' motivation to obtain a university degree and succeed in life.

### **Cultural value of education**

Education is highly valued by Mexicans. Education is not only seen as a measure of self-worth but more importantly as a means to secure financial stability in order to help parents or family in the future. This is reflected in participants' words:

I feel that when I finish the degree or even before finishing it, I am going to get a good job. I feel it is going to be quick. Most of all to have a sustainable life... being able to cover my personal needs and help my mother. If in the future I decide to have a family, with a good job I will have the financial resources to support it. [JIMMY – INTERVIEW]

The paramount importance of having a university degree seems to be reflected in the choice students had to make when registering at university. Half of the students (nine) had to leave their hopes and vocations aside in

order to be able to go to university. Due to economic limitations, these students had to choose a degree in the city where they lived. Most students wanted to study a degree not offered in the city, but due to a lack of financial support, they had to choose from the degrees offered at the Mayche University:

The degree I really wanted to study was medicine but there was no information about this degree starting here. There was the option of studying it in Oaxaca or Taxco or Morelia but my parents didn't want me to...they roundly refused to accept the idea of me leaving the house and they said no....they said that it was a very expensive degree...that it was not going to be possible for them to sustain my studies and this and that...so I decided to choose a degree from the ones offered here at the Mayche University. [JADED - INTERVIEW]

In spite of studying for a degree which was not their first choice, students were determined to finish the degree no matter what it took, as expressed by Natalia:

Well...I am here now. I am in this degree and I have to take advantage of this opportunity to be at university....because I couldn't go and study what I really wanted to, but yes, it has affected me because sometimes I ask myself – what I am doing here? But then I think about how many students were left without a place at university and then I try to make a great effort to improve and... Yes...I have to study more...Well, and for a situation my motivation is not going to be affected....I mean I am not going to allow it to destroy me...no. You have to bear it in mind so you do not make the same mistake again. Yes, I have to study more, but a situation is not going to affect my motivation, I mean I do not think it is going to have such an effect as to make me drop out of the degree. [NATALIA - INTERVIEW]

Natalia's words reflect the high value given to having a university degree, no matter what degree it is, even though this degree may not fulfil an individual's

vocation and may lead them to do something completely different to what they may have dreamed of becoming.

### **Getting a university degree**

As expressed above, the act of getting a university degree is highly valued in Mexican society. It not only makes a person valuable and respected but it is also considered a way to ease current social or economic limitations by assigning to a university degree the hope that better times will come through obtaining it. Dayana, who was experiencing parental disagreements and fights because of lack of money, expressed:

All those problems are the ones that help me to continue...because for example...the problems at home...I say to myself: if I quit university the problems are going to become bigger... by contrast if I finish the degree I am going to have a life...I will be able to help my family...for instance financially...I could help them a lot and there would be fewer problems....so this is what helps me to continue. [DAYANA-INTERVIEW]

For some (eight) students, the difficult experiences at home because of financial limitations pushed them to get a university degree, while for others it was more a matter of enabling their parents to live a dream they had been unable to accomplish because they had not had the opportunity.

### **Securing a better economic future**

As explained above, students' economic pressures continually mixed with some of their emotional reactions in their language classes. For some students (eight), the lack of money was a constant worry which may have stopped them from thinking about leaving the degree, and encouraged them to look for ways to be able to continue in the degree.

Well, my motivation is high because my parents have struggled really hard for me to be here...when I go to see my parents...they ask me why not? 'You have to make your best effort, you can and you have to finish your degree,' says my father...'because when you finish and you and your sister are working you have to take your younger brothers with you so they can also study'. [ESPERANZA- INTERVIEW]

I have to continue...I have to continue in the degree...make my best effort. This is what is going to help me when I finish....this is the way to support myself...this is going to put food on my table....my mum is not going to support me all her life, is she? She is going to say no someday and I cannot fail some subjects and spend 20 years in university...when I ask myself when...when are you going to finish?...this causes a reaction and I cannot continue like this. [DAYANA – INTERVIEW]

Securing a better economic future is not only a sign of success but also a way to be able to face future economic responsibilities towards parents or relatives. The moral and economic responsibilities imposed by students' backgrounds contributed to enhancing their motivational energy. The socio-economic backgrounds of these students and the moral responsibilities imposed on Mexican students contributed to transforming the experience of negative emotions into a force that motivated students to achieve the goal not only of passing a course but also of obtaining a university degree which holds the key to social success. These conclusions lead to Finding Three:

- 3) The influence of the Mexican setting contributed to students diminishing the negative effects of negative emotional experiences and transforming these into positive motivational energy.**

#### **5.2.4 Third research sub-question**

##### **1c. How is motivation connected to affective experience?**

Motivation is closely connected to affective experience, as reported by this particular group of students. Students' feelings about experiencing positive and negative emotions over the term were favourable. Positive emotions increased their self-confidence, allowed them to experience feelings of self-efficacy, helped the group to bond and contributed to the creation of a positive learning environment. However, the negative outcome of positive emotions revealed by students was that they just rested on their laurels.

Students recognised that negative situations were sometimes difficult to cope with; however, they all accepted such situations as being beneficial for their language learning motivation because they were alerted by negative emotions to areas they needed to work on. Negative events led the students to be doubtful about their choice of registering in the ELT programme, made them feel insecure, added to the negative environment developed through fear of the teacher and made the students perceive learning English as difficult, which contributed to diminishing their self-concept of competence. However, the insecurity and the perception of learning English as a difficult task led the students to develop language learning awareness and learning strategies while at the same time forcing them to exercise motivational strategies to encourage themselves, thus enhancing their motivation to learn.



#### **5.2.4.1 Emotional experiences' effects on language learners' motivation**

All (18) students considered that emotions, both positive and negative, were of great importance for their language learning process because emotions allowed them to continue and gave them the drive to overcome those academic problems they were facing, as they reported:

...emotions are of great importance, without them I would have been a mediocre student...leaving everything half-assed, and thanks to them I am still at university. I consider that there are not good or bad emotions...good as well as bad ones ended up being good because without the bad ones I would not have had the push to make my best effort at university. [ENRIQUE – INTERVIEW]

If I hadn't felt afraid I wouldn't have told myself 'I am going to succeed'. [ESPERANZA – INTERVIEW]

Somehow emotions have helped me to reflect...to know what's right...to look for solutions for wrong things and to try to make my best effort... [LUNA – INTERVIEW]

As revealed by all (18) students in the study, emotions were positive because they made them think about their role as language learners, made them realise those areas they needed to work on and, most importantly, made them reflect.

#### **Positive effects of positive emotions**

Students experienced positive emotions that allowed them to have feelings of enhanced self-efficacy. These feelings allowed them to see their language advancement, which contributed to erasing their insecurity and giving them confidence, as expressed by some students:

...for instance when teachers told me something good about my performance in class, I felt really happy...I was so enthusiastic all day in classes. You feel great...you feel like participating more in class because you know you are doing things right. [AKIRA – INTERVIEW]

Well...I feel good and try to make my best effort in my studies...yes, I study more...I try to interact more with my classmates. [HANNA – INTERVIEW]

As the term advanced, students felt more confident because they were able to see that their efforts were paying off, especially in examination marks, which are very valuable for Mexican students:

Happiness because I saw the results...I could confirm that if I worked hard I could have good results...this is what makes...this is what makes me feel happy...knowing that yes, I can! [KENYA – INTERVIEW]

Confidence allowed students to take some risks in their language learning process and some started to refer to mistakes as something that you have to go through in order to be able to speak a foreign language. Students also started looking for ways to introduce phrases or vocabulary they had heard on USA TV in order to make their oral and written output more natural. These small decisions allowed them to reenergise and helped them to keep motivated.

### **Negative effects of positive emotions**

Most (16) students recognised that after a positive emotion they did nothing to improve their language learning process:

As soon as I answered correctly I felt relief. I just felt nervous at the beginning...I thought it would be good to do something about it like practising more but I did nothing. As it was something so pleasant I just enjoyed it. [ANGIE – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

Students reported that after a positive emotion there was nothing to do but enjoy the feeling so they did not think about it. This is the only negative effect positive emotions had on students' motivation.

### **Negative effects of negative emotions**

Negative emotions were frequently experienced by this group of students. For the first time students were facing being spoken to in English for the whole class period, and doubts about their degree choice started to emerge from the very first week of the term. Half of the students (nine) revealed in their personal narratives having wanted to study something different but, because of financial reasons, they had had to choose a degree at the Mayche University. This fact made them doubtful about being on the ELT programme.

Having obtained such a low mark made me feel really bad and has made me think about the ELT programme being the right degree for me. [JANE – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

This low mark...I had to admit it was a three...made me wonder if I was really made to become an English teacher...I questioned and doubted myself, thinking that I may not be good at it. [JADED – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

Feeling unsure of being able to finish the degree caused insecurity in students, which contributed to their fears. Students' fears led some (nine) to see English learning as a very difficult task that they were not able to accomplish.

This perception was magnified by the presence of an advanced group of students in class. By looking at this group's performance, students realised the great gap between them and the advanced group. Students' confidence

deteriorated because they started to make comparisons with more proficient learners in the group. The ability division contributed to a lack of group cohesion, which made the learning environment very ineffective:

I would like the class to be more respectful when someone is participating or presenting something because I don't like to see how they make fun of some classmates...they talk behind people's backs. [AKIRA – INTERVIEW]

I think that if the group were more united then we could work pleasantly...because for some classmates the activities were very easy so they didn't want to talk that much...they didn't want to participate...they just said what they were supposed to say and didn't want to practice...and I like to practice but they get bored... [ANGELA – INTERVIEW]

Lack of group cohesion contributed to students' feelings that they were not allowed space and time to practise. This feeling led them to think they were not making any progress and perceived their pronunciation to be not as good as that of their classmates. This constrained their participation in class because they knew that some classmates would mock them. Fearing the teacher's feedback and their peers' mockery led students to stop trying in class. This made some students feel angry towards themselves, but they reported that sometimes their fear of mockery was higher than their desire to speak fluently.

Although students reported that being afraid of the teacher and their peers' mocking was a constant feeling throughout the term, importantly they also revealed that the effects of these events were short-lived because they could not spend all the time recalling a specific negative event.

### **Positive effects of negative emotions**

Negative emotions started to emerge during the first sessions of the course. Students' knowledge was very basic and they started to panic when not able to understand everything the teacher was saying or explaining. Fear, worry and sadness were the three main negative emotions students experienced during the first third of the term. Students reported being afraid of being laughed at while participating in class activities, worried about not being able to understand everything the teachers were explaining, and sad about their lack of vocabulary which restricted their participation in class. The ability division in the group pushed low proficient learners to develop their language abilities. It was because of this that students started to develop a sense of responsibility towards their language learning process, which led them to develop learning and motivational strategies from the very first week of the term.

Reflection also seemed to have started early in the term because of a critical incident that students reported in the third week regarding the marking system the teacher used in a writing task. This episode seemed to have marked the course since some students reported feeling different after this event in class. However, the negative feelings experienced during this event were the ones that pushed them to be aware of their active role in their own language learning process.

### **Language learning awareness**

Although students' realisation of the proficiency difference between them and their peers made them feel sad and frightened, it also made them aware of the time and effort needed to be able to speak fluently:

Well...I have tried to do certain things so I can feel good about myself and do not feel sad or down because I see the advanced students. If they are more proficient it is because they have studied more and I do not have to feel bad about it. On the contrary, I have to make my best effort in my studies. [NATALIA – INTERVIEW]

Thanks to all these experiences in class I am more conscious of the need to invest more time to study at home...I have been looking for web pages to practise and chat with native speakers so I can learn expressions and be able to speak better. [RICARDO – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

Students embraced negative events as learning opportunities because all of them (18) referred to these negative events in class as a way of understanding what they were doing wrong and how to improve in that particular skill. Most students' (17) fear was about their speaking ability because it was the skill that caused their peers to make fun of them. Students started to look for vocabulary to enrich their oral participation, practised their vocabulary by watching USA TV programmes, encouraged peers to practise with them in order to gain confidence, and dedicated more time to reviewing at home the topics covered in class time.

I analysed myself and realised that I have to practise my English every day...I registered in a conversation workshop and started to review every night the notes from my class. [JIMMY – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

Most students (16) reported realising areas in which they were making mistakes, while others started to develop resilience towards negative experiences. Some students (ten) stated that these negative experiences were things they needed to overcome if they wanted not only to pass the course, but also to finish the degree. Students considered these negative experiences as a natural process that needed to be faced if they desired to

speaking a foreign language. This is clearly expressed in the following references:

When participating in class and making some minor errors, I realised there is nothing wrong with making them...we all have to go through that...and by not taking the mockery or offensive criticisms into account... I think this is the best I have done to feel motivated to make my best effort in the future. [JADED – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

I think in a negative way but thinking carefully ...positive because every time I am at the front saying something or explaining something...speaking in public helps me to overcome this weakness that I need to be a strength in the future...[JANE– JOURNAL/ Weeks 9-12]

Although some (nine) students felt insecure about their abilities to learn a foreign language during the first third of the term, most of them (16) convinced themselves that it was a matter of practice and not a lack of intellectual ability (Covington, 1992). This contributed to students looking for solutions to improve their language knowledge by making use of different learning strategies that could help them to learn in a better way.

### **Language learning strategies**

From experiencing the very first negative events in class, students started to look for ways to make their language learning process an effective one. Students resorted to the use of learning strategies to diversify their approach to learning English. Students reported making use of diverse strategies in order to overcome those learning difficulties they were facing in their daily classes. Some (eight) students reported not feeling upset about the language proficiency of the advanced students but motivated to be able to speak like them in the future. The group of proficient students gave the beginner students

a push to try to make their best efforts, as reported by the different ways they used to approach their learning concerns:

I don't have to feel worthless in class just because others participate or understand better than me. I have to make my best effort to be at their level. [NATALIA – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

I have to think that I am at a learning stage...I do not have to ask myself what I cannot do at this stage...I have to work on this. [ANGELICA – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

I started to listen to conversations in English, to watch movies to practise my vocabulary and pronunciation...and I am also listening to songs in English. [DAYANA – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

Language learning strategies were tools students made use of in order to develop their language abilities and their confidence in class. Besides learning strategies, students also resorted to the use of motivational strategies to keep them energised to continue in the ELT programme, as their ultimate goal was to get a university degree and move on to employment in order to fulfil other needs in their lives.

### **Developing motivational strategies**

Although students recognised that maintaining their motivation was their responsibility, they also considered that teachers could contribute greatly to it by making classes more dynamic and learning activities more fun. Students reflected on their family values when referring to being motivated. Although all (18) students agreed that maintaining their motivation was their own responsibility, they also stated that their families were a part of this responsibility. They considered that they needed that affective push from mothers, fathers, siblings and friends to reenergise. Most students (16)



resorted to emotional self-regulation and self-encouragement in order to keep their motivation energy at good levels:

Believe in myself...believe that I can achieve my goal of learning English and finishing the degree if I desire...I have to set some goals and complete certain activities that I have planned to learn more every day...believe that I can do it. [KENYA – JOURNAL/ Weeks 9-12]

Every day when I arrive at class I repeat to myself that everything is going to be all right and I believe it. [RICARDO – JOURNAL/ Weeks 5-8]

Students' attitudes towards the experience of negative events were very positive. They all recognised that during life they would have to face many negative events so they had to be prepared to face them. These conclusions led to Finding Number Four:

**4a. Positive experiences helped most students to maintain their high levels of motivation and to endure negative experiences.**

**4b. Negative experiences made most students realise they needed to diversify their approach to learning if they wanted to maintain their motivation and finish the degree.**

### **5.3 Summary**

This chapter has set out the analysis and presentation of the findings using the research question and sub-questions as the framework to introduce the themes emerging from students' emotional experiences. Extracts from students' journals and interviews were used to exemplify the points of analysis, and explanations of Mexican cultural values were given to aid understanding of the students' positive reactions towards the negative events being faced in their language learning process. By using participants' own words, I aim to accurately represent students' reality and the situations analysed. The following chapter will discuss the main points of analysis regarding the emotional experiences of foreign language learners in Mexico in order to gain a deeper understanding of how affective experiences influenced their motivation.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Discussion: An analysis of language learners' motivation**

#### **6.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents a discussion of the study findings in order to gain a deeper understanding of how Mexican language learners' emotional experiences impact on their motivation. The discussion will be based on four analytic categories outlined from the study findings as having the greatest impact on Mexican students' emotional experiences and motivation. The purpose of this chapter is to provide interpretative insights into the findings presented in Chapter 5. In the interest of providing a fuller picture of the research context, I shall also, where the findings allow, explore and interpret data that deviate from the majority view in order to present a richer and more complete picture of the diversity of responses found in Mexican students' emotional experiences. By examining ruptures, break-ups, and fractures in educational practices, an 'acceptable' student self can be denaturalised and can help us to know multiple and conflicting student selves (Miller, 1998). The ideas presented in this chapter will be discussed in relation to the relevant literature on humanistic education, motivation research in ELT and emotions in general education.

## **6.1 Emotional experiences of Mexican language learners**

Although emotions in language learning have been important since the origin of the ELT field, no consideration was given to these until humanistic education brought attention to the affective domain. In the ELT field, attention to emotion was incorporated through humanistic methods in the 1970s (Curran, 1972; Gattegno, 1972; Lozanov, 1978). However, these methods were criticised because language teachers were said to be paying more attention to the affective than to the cognitive side of learning (Gadd, 1998).

Currently, researchers acknowledge the need to review motivation from an affective perspective (MacIntyre, 2002; Dörnyei, 2005; Meyer and Turner, 2006; Dörnyei, 2007). Although there have been numerous studies on motivation in the ELT field and emotions studies in education, it seems that no studies in ELT have focused on the relation between motivation and learners' emotional experiences, as this shift to the affective aspect of motivation has only relatively recently been suggested (MacIntyre, 2002; So, 2004). The incipient research on emotions in ELT has been on distance language learning (Hurd, 2008), affective reactions to instruction (Garret and Young, 2009), self-regulated learning (Bown and White, 2010) and collaborative learning (Imai, 2010). Although these studies have focused on feelings and emotions, they have not concentrated on the connection of these to the motivational behaviour displayed by foreign language learners. Thus, this study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge on how foreign language learning motivation is shaped by emotions.

This study has focused on the emotional experiences Mexican university students went through over a period of 12 weeks in a second language course. Results suggest that emotions are closely related to motivational

energy, impacting on it both positively and negatively. Although negative emotions may be considered detrimental to foreign language learning, the findings of this study show that negative emotions in the Mexican context served as learning enhancers. Positive emotions were also revealed as having a negative impact on learners' motivation: since students thought they were doing well enough, they did not make any further efforts after experiencing a positive situation or event. These results suggest that emotions, both negative and positive, contribute to enhancing and diminishing motivation, and are important for the foreign language learning process. This is in line with previous research on emotions in general education (Pekrun et al., 2002; Efklides and Petkaki, 2005; Järvenova and Järvelä, 2005; Hascher, 2007, 2008).

My analysis confirms a number of themes identified in the literature on humanistic education, motivation and emotions. The data set from participants shows the importance of the affective, the context and the social in relation to the maintenance of students' motivational energy in foreign language learning.

This study focused on 18 foreign language learners in a Southeast Mexican university (see Appendix I), and the conclusions drawn are based upon a detailed investigation of this small group, so general claims are not being made. Although there were limitations in the scope and design of this study, there were nevertheless interesting insights from learners' emotional experiences that can help teachers to be more attentive to the messages they send, not only with words but through their whole being. This, in turn, can lead to changes that could be made to benefit to a wider group in different institutions.

The findings of the research were presented in detail in the previous chapter. In this chapter, I interpret and summarise these findings into four main analytic categories, as follows:

1. the influence of the teacher on Mexican students' emotional experiences and motivation;
2. the impact of peers on Mexican students' emotional experiences and motivation;
3. the manifestation of negative emotional experiences as positive results; and
4. the influence of the social context on Mexican students' emotional experiences and motivation.

#### **6.1.1 Analytic category one: The influence of the teacher on Mexican students' emotional experiences and motivation**

The powerful role teachers' practice has on foreign language learners' motivation was strongly evident in the study findings. Although the purpose of this study was not to make a comparison between two teachers, participants of the study reported two different classroom atmospheres they encountered during the research period. These two environments led to opposing emotional experiences and, consequently, students' motivational behaviour in these classes was very different. Teacher 1 was revealed as the main source of students' negative feelings and emotions regarding class participation and motivation. The teacher's interpersonal skills, non-verbal communication and feedback approach were recurrent topics when students recalled their predominantly negative emotions or discussed their feelings about the term they had just finished.

## **Interpersonal skills**

Although one of the basic conditions for instilling motivation in students is the establishment of good teacher-student rapport (Dörnyei, 2001a), Teacher 1's interpersonal skills inhibited this. According to recent research into the emotional intelligence of EFL teachers, it was found that teachers' interpersonal skills were highly correlated with their teaching success (Ghanizadeh and Moafian, 2010). Participants in my study referred to the teacher making faces when they arrived late for class, or making some gestures that they perceived not to be respectful to students and which then inhibited them from participating in class.

She doesn't like us to be late for class. I realised she made a face at me... this was something extra for me to be upset about ...I have heard comments about the faces she makes when someone arrives late for class...I realised it is true! [KENYA – JOURNAL/ Weeks 5-8]

I realised that the teacher's gestures and body language are not motivating for students...I consider these are very rude... I find it difficult to explain but I think that these are the things that cause the very poor response towards her in class. [RICARDO – JOURNAL/ Weeks 5-8]

My study participants referred to the way Teacher 1 would encourage them to come and talk to her during her office hours, but one student stated that nobody dared to go to her office having seen how she reacted if anybody approached her when the class had just finished and she was picking up her belongings. Students were getting mixed signals, as expressed by Esperanza:

She always says 'when you need something come to me'...but when I approached her she was really sharp...if she had responded in a different way.....when she is in the classroom she *tries*...but if you go to her office she is very different and other classmates have experienced it also...so why go to her? You just don't feel like it. [ESPERANZA– INTERVIEW]

Learners recognised Teacher 1 as a good professional. However, they also expressed their fear, frustration and anger at the teacher's attitude and lack of understanding of their learning process. Teaching is not effective if no individual relationships with students are developed in order to build their self-confidence and maintain their motivational energy at good levels. As suggested by Dörnyei (2001a), a positive relationship with students is a condition necessary for the development of intrinsic motivation.

As teachers, we tend to forget that students are going through a lot outside the classroom, and by showing genuine interest in students' concerns we can make a difference to our learners' motivation, as expressed by some (eight) students:

...the friendly side of a teacher helps us as students to be more motivated because those teachers who care always tell you...'you can come to me if you have any doubts', and you go to them and they help you and you learn more...this interaction makes you feel good because in some cases teachers are very rigid and don't even smile...and you feel really stressed in those classes and you don't even want to move because the teacher is going to scold you.  
[VERONICA – INTERVIEW]

As explained above, most students felt uncomfortable in class with Teacher 1 since they perceived the teacher as not genuinely interested in them as foreign language learners or as people. However, there were some exceptions that may be explained by the individual characteristics of students, as well as by the economic pressures some of them were under during the period of this study.

Although most (15) students felt uneasy when in class with Teacher 1, others (three) felt comfortable with her teaching approach, as expressed by Luna,



who reacted in a very negative way, not to the writing task feedback, but towards herself. She considered that it was her lack of effort that had caused the writing mark to be so low. She never referred to the teacher as being intimidating or scary. On the contrary, she always referred to her classes as very dynamic, and she enjoyed Teacher 1's classes all term, as stated in her interview:

Um...well, it was almost in all her classes, in most of them I felt comfortable...because I like ...I feel confident with Teacher 1, with her classes, with the activities...I felt, well...happy. [LUNA – INTERVIEW]

Why did Luna feel differently in a class where most students felt humiliated and intimidated? She came from a rural background and might have considered the teacher an authority figure and source of knowledge she had to respect and accept, no matter what. In addition, Luna had desired from a very early age to become an English teacher (ideal L2 self). She was confident about her language abilities because she had taken extracurricular classes, so she participated in class and felt secure when doing so.

Another student who never referred to Teacher 1 as being intimidating was Dayana. Dayana had a very difficult time at home because of family issues and economic pressures. She had never taken English classes except for the basic courses at secondary and preparatory school. She was afraid of making mistakes because of her peers' mockery, but this fear made her concentrate on improving her language abilities.

I decided that I did not want to feel stupid in class, I wanted to know as much as my classmates so I could understand the teacher and participate more in her class. I am going to make my best effort ...I am going to start practising my listening ability, I registered in a conversation workshop and I am going to ask my classmates when I do not understand a topic in class. [DAYANA – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

Dayana also referred to the class as a way to escape from her reality at home. She considered that by concentrating in her classes she could achieve her goal to be independent from her parents and go away from home and the constant unpleasant fighting between her parents. It seems that her home reality helped her to minimise the issues of the classroom environment and concentrate on her own needs. By exercising emotional regulation when in class she was able to concentrate and boost her motivation to make her best effort in order to finish the degree and get into the labour market to become independent (self-determination).

Angie did feel intimidated by the teacher and reported her reticence to participate in class because she witnessed the sharp feedback given to another student. She also accepted being more comfortable by letting an advanced student be the one who always answered the teacher's questions because it was easier for him. She acknowledged not wanting to bother trying to stutter through her poor English when the advanced student was always so willing to show off his good English. Angie admitted that it was annoying that this advanced student was always the one participating, but she also accepted it was the whole group's fault because nobody tried to change this. In spite of feeling intimidated, Angie had the courage to tell the teacher she felt that way after an oral exam. She reported feeling relief about expressing to Teacher 1 how she felt about her. This act of confrontation boosted her motivation when preparing for activities in class with Teacher 1, as described in the following reference:

I realised that what has happened with this teacher (*referring to Teacher 1*) has motivated me; I am not one of those students who spends time preparing material to study or something like that ...I just take my class notes or books and review...but now I have

devoted time to practice what I have learned with my classmates or by myself or when I have an opportunity to use a phrase or new vocabulary in my everyday life. I am also thinking of designing a table to stick in my room so I can practice them at any opportunity I have. [ANGIE – JOURNAL/ Weeks 5-8]

However, this feeling of relief changed to anger when Angie found out about the low mark the teacher had given her in an oral examination. Her anger was not about the low mark but about the teacher telling her that her test performance was very good and Angie had thought her mark would have reflected that. Her oral test mark was not as good as she had expected after the teacher's compliment. She felt bad about the incongruence between the teacher's words and the real mark given to her. Angie reported feeling frustrated and angry at being treated in this way. After this event, Angie's motivation in class with Teacher 1 changed, as she described paying no attention to the teacher, getting distracted easily, not participating in activities and chatting with classmates when the teacher was explaining something. As this participant's experience shows, praise should be sincere and specific about students' efforts, because they should also be encouraged to self-correct and self-evaluate. In providing praise, teachers create false perceptions of students' advancement and generate expectations regarding their marks.

A positive teacher-student relationship cannot be promoted by giving praise which is not congruent with students' abilities; especially when students' marks (which are very valuable to Mexican students) do not reflect the praise given to them. The teacher was giving mixed signals and instead of motivating this student, the opposite was achieved because Angie felt the teacher was not really interested in her language development by giving her praise that did

not correspond to her abilities. Thus, Angie understood this as an uncaring attitude (emotional misunderstanding).

It is important to be fair to all students because they are very attentive to teachers' responses and actions towards all members of a class (Lei, 2007). Students value being recognised as individuals working towards a unique goal (Dörnyei, 2001a). Natalia expressed her disappointment at not being identified by name by her teachers. When one teacher called her by her name in the first week of a course, she expressed her happiness and willingness to work hard in that class because she was not considered merely a number. In spite of her efforts to be noticed by putting up her hand when a general question was asked, this student constantly reported not being noticed in classes. She perceived herself as being of no value when most teachers ignored her raised hand and chose a different student to answer. Although these points may be of little importance to some teachers who have huge workloads, it is through these actions that motivation can be enhanced. As highlighted in the literature, teachers' actions and responses have a powerful influence on learners' emotions and motivation (Williams et al., 2004; Dörnyei, 2007; Lei, 2007; Guilloteaux and Dörnyei, 2008; Yan and Horwitz, 2008; Garret and Young, 2009).

### **Non-verbal communication**

The importance of creating a non-threatening environment conducive to learning was introduced by humanistic education (Gage and Beliner, 1992), and has been reported as a powerful aspect impacting on students' emotions and motivational behaviour (Järvenova and Järvelä, 2005; Meyer and Turner, 2006; Dörnyei, 2001a, 2007; Gläser-Zikuda and Järvelä, 2008; Guilloteaux and Dörnyei, 2008; Yan and Horwitz, 2008). In this study, it seems that

Teacher 1 tried to develop a positive environment during the first weeks of the term. However, her efforts were not fruitful because her body language and discourse seemed to be sending the opposite message from her words. As a result, interaction between Teacher 1 and the students did not develop positively. This supports Dörnyei (2001a) motivational strategies proposal in that a positive classroom atmosphere is a condition for intrinsic motivation to be developed.

Although Teacher 1 might not have been aware that she was sending negative messages with her voice and body language, many students perceived these as threatening their confidence and decided not to participate in her class (emotional misunderstanding), which contributed to diminishing their motivation on the course. The same was reported by a learner studying Russian in an individualised instruction programme in the USA. The learner reported feeling stupid because the instructor made faces when the learner was trying to structure a sentence. This feeling led the learner to restructure her face-to-face sessions to avoid that particular instructor so that the negative feelings were not faced again (Bown and White, 2010).

In a recent study by Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008), students' motivated learning behaviour was considered to be indicated by the amount of attention paid in class, and the extent of students' participation in and volunteering for activities. Although results in my study showed that participants displayed high levels of motivation to complete the ELT programme, the students also expressed their lack of motivation towards participating in the course they were taking with Teacher 1 because of the gestures they faced when making a mistake, mispronouncing a word or arriving late. Students perceived the tone of voice used by the teacher was not neutral and this contributed to the

diminishing of learners' self-confidence. As a result, the classroom environment was very strained.

Students in my study reported that Teacher 1's gestures made them feel scolded every time they attempted to participate in learning activities and this decreased their self-confidence both in and out of classroom tasks. In a recent study in an individualised instruction setting, it was found that the instructors' gestures were inhibiting a learner's interaction, even though face-to-face sessions were arranged by the student (Bown and White, 2010). It seems that participants in my study decided to not try anymore in Teacher's 1 class as they perceived that their efforts were not recognised. Due to the scarce and strained interaction between the teacher and the students, the latter perceived the teacher to be neither supporting nor motivating them. As a consequence, students did not participate in class unless coaxed by the teacher in diverse ways. These results therefore confirm Guilloteaux and Dörnyei's (2008) suggestion that teachers' motivational teaching practice is directly related to how students approach classroom learning, as well as Dörnyei's (2007) observation that the affective and motivational character of classrooms is a function of the teacher's motivational practice.

### **Feedback approach**

The feedback exercised by Teacher 1 seemed to be judgmental and non-formative in nature (Dörnyei, 1994). Participants' first writing task feedback was a critical event for most of them because of the detailed correction and marking system used by Teacher 1. Oral and written feedback made students question whether what they were doing was correct or not. This is clearly expressed in the following quote:

I felt a little nervous because I had to hand in another composition in which I had to describe my family. As I was saying...it is true that the teacher marks every detail since she says we are going to be future English teachers...but the situation experienced did affect me because when the teacher asked for this type of exercise, I felt nervous because it has created the fear of worrying about whether what I have done is correct or not. [RICARDO– JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

This constant questioning increased students' insecurity, as well as creating in them the feeling that they were not able to learn English. When teachers provide oral feedback their words and gestures can be taken personally rather than as simply referring to students' language advancement, and this can contribute to students' insecurity and doubts about their competence (emotional misunderstanding). Students may have felt the teacher was not supporting them by providing them with this type of feedback, and this added to the students' low self-concept of competence and made them compare themselves with the advanced students in the group. According to Arnold (2007), a student's self-concept can be compromised when receiving feedback because the teacher can reinforce what is already low. Thus, students perceived the feedback was not useful or beneficial for their self-concept of competence and lost their motivation in this particular class. Perceptions of the teacher as being judgmental and not informative about individual progress corresponded with reduced motivation. This pattern is consistent with Noels et al.'s (1999) findings that the more students perceived their teachers as failing to provide instructive feedback, the less they were intrinsically motivated.

Teacher 1's feedback approach made students' fear deepen and constrained them from trying to make a good effort in class activities. Students seemed to not receive any praise for their efforts, and the focus of the feedback was only

on what students were doing wrong. With the teacher constantly pointing out mistakes, students' confidence deteriorated and this contributed greatly to their reticence to participate in class. It also greatly impeded the development of a good teacher-student rapport.

For some students, the incident concerning the feedback from the first writing task was a critical experience and contributed greatly to their insecurity, since they were starting their second English course. For Ricardo, the experience made him see the class and the teacher through a new lens, as expressed below:

It made me feel terrified when I have to hand in a writing task to the teacher because I do not know how it is going to go...the truth is it really made me feel uneasy as a student which is not really helpful because I am not that confident. Although sometimes I try to think of something else...the bare fact that I have to hand in a piece of homework makes me feel really afraid...I am honest when telling you that when I go into this classroom I become someone different, someone who feels uncomfortable because I feel insecure...the truth is I am not the only one...but feeling this way...affects me a lot.  
[RICARDO – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

After receiving his mark on the writing task, Ricardo felt really disappointed about the teacher's grading system. He recognised that she might have been right but felt she should have warned them about her system before the first task. He felt very strongly about it, mentioning having felt hatred, anger and disappointment. His perception of the teacher changed drastically after this incident and continued deteriorating throughout the term because of the teacher's non-verbal communication. This supports Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998) L2 process-oriented model in that motivation is composed of different stages affected in each of these stages by diverse motivational factors.



Enrique also reacted strongly to the teacher's feedback approach. His attitude changed completely after the first feedback was received, and deteriorated throughout the term. He considered quitting the class and registering again the following academic year with a different teacher.

At the beginning I felt demotivated, I did not want to continue it. I thought about failing the course and then taking it with a different teacher. But my motivation changed again and I mentally kept on telling myself "I am not going to fail"....and this made me stay on the course. I had to fight to do the things, making my best effort ....and I was not going to allow a human being to intimidate me because she has a degree...I mean she deserves respect for her effort and degree...but I also as a student deserve to be respected.  
[ENRIQUE– INTERVIEW]

In spite of his motivational fluctuation throughout the term, Enrique stayed in the class and was able to pass the course. Enrique was confident in his language abilities because he has taken extracurricular courses since secondary school and considered the teacher's grading system extremely rigid. I believe he saw the writing feedback incident as an opportunity to show to himself and to the teacher that he knew English. It was a challenge for him to stay in Teacher 1's class and demonstrate to her that he had the linguistic knowledge to pass the course (self-worth theory).

It is interesting to see that the students who reacted strongly to the feedback incident were all from a city background. Some students (four) from rural areas did not mention the event in their journals, and the ones who did attributed the low mark to their own poor effort placed on the task and not to the grading system exercised by the teacher. In Mexican rural areas the priest, the doctor and the teacher represent an authority figure since the 1900s

because they are the ones that can control communities in specific situations. It seems that students from rural areas are more respectful of the authority figure the teacher represents and may have considered the experience as resulting from their own lack of linguistic abilities, since most of them had not taken extracurricular English classes during their secondary or preparatory schooling.

By looking at participants who seem to feel differently from the majority, it is possible to gain an insight into how students' individual characteristics shaped the way they experienced instructional situations. As found in the literature, one specific situation can have different meanings for individual students (Do and Schallert, 2004; Hascher, 2007; Garret and Young, 2009). Although the majority of the students blamed the teacher for the poor feedback on the writing task, and others blamed their own poor linguistic abilities and lack of effort, the event impacted the group's performance for the rest of the course (motivational influence), as revealed by the very poor class participation in daily class activities reported by all (18) students. The writing task feedback happened in the third week of the term when students were in the process of establishing the rules and norms of the classroom (L2 process-oriented model). However, it seems that no rapport was able to be established after this event. Although the teacher tried to talk to students about the class environment, their fear did not allow them to share their feelings, and no change was possible.

The study data suggests that students' motivation is greatly affected by the emotions caused by the teacher's interpersonal skills, non-verbal communication and feedback approach. This, then, is an enormous responsibility that teachers need to consider (Horwitz, 1995; Gregersen,

2007). As pointed out by Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008), finding ways to raise teachers' awareness of their feedback practices and training them in using skills that can help them to motivate learners should be a prominent methodological concern.

### **6.1.2 Analytic category two: The impact of peers on Mexican students' emotional experiences and motivation**

Students repeatedly reported in their first journal entries being afraid to speak in English. This fear was understandable because they had just finished their first year in which all subjects, except for English, were taught in Spanish, so they were facing being spoken to in English in all their subjects for the first time. Students were not only adjusting to listening to English during classes, but also getting used to expressing their ideas and using more complex structures in this foreign language. However, the fact that students' language level was basic led to fear and doubts about their abilities to speak the language. Thus, students feared participating in class from the very first week of the term, as expressed by Hanna:

I didn't understand anything, I was silent...I didn't know what to say when the teacher asked us to participate. I was afraid because she speaks very quietly and I didn't understand anything she was saying. [HANNA – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

This fear was partly caused by the teacher, as already discussed. However, the fear of speaking English was made worse by a group of high proficiency students in the class. This advanced student group had a profound impact on participants' performance and motivation to participate in class. Due to the language level difference, low proficiency students constantly compared

themselves with the advanced group, which was very detrimental to their self-confidence. This is clearly expressed by Jimmy:

The teacher asked us to work in groups and I ended up with the advanced group...the teacher asked us to comment on a video we had just watched...I felt embarrassed and could not express my thoughts...then...Memo started to speak and wow, he speaks so fluently...that made me feel unworthy. [JIMMY – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

Students' constant comparisons with their proficient peers made them feel unable to communicate in English when interacting with them in classroom activities, because they were afraid they might make a mistake, and some felt not as capable as their other classmates. As a result, lower proficiency students did not try to participate and, consequently, these students did not have the opportunity to develop their language abilities. This created competition and a lack of group cohesion because there was no interaction and, consequently, no integration could be achieved while some students felt humiliated. These results support Bailey's (1983) and Schumann's (1998) observations that teambuilding and cooperation are supportive for learning, whereas competition fosters negative affective experiences detrimental to motivation and to language learning processes. Once again, as students avoided participating in class, they did not experience any feelings of competence and this contributed to their reported low level of motivational behaviour. Feelings of competence are a crucial step in the development of intrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

The learning environment became hostile because low proficiency students reported being mocked by peers when making a mistake or mispronouncing a

word (motivational influence). As a result, insecurity appeared and led to diminishing feelings of self-efficacy that made the students question whether what they were doing was correct or not.

I did not want to make mistakes...so my classmates could not make fun of me... I wished I did not have to participate in the class of Teacher 1...I always showed my nervousness and I usually made mistakes even if I knew the answer or knew how to say something...because I feared my peers mocking. [ENRIQUE-INTERVIEW]

Fear was hindering students' learning processes since it promoted insecurity, diminishing feelings of self-efficacy, lack of group cohesion, poor class participation and, consequently, produced a very harmful environment that seemed to have deteriorated day after day, provoking students to switch off.

While most students decided not to open themselves up to such unpleasant experiences again and to preserve their self-worth (Covington, 1996) by not participating at all in class activities, there were some (three) participants who revealed that their peers' high levels of proficiency had an opposite effect on them, as described by Natalia:

We were talking about the language proficiency difference among us in the group and ...this makes me want to improve and work hard so I can be at the same level as the advanced students...so I can participate more in class. [NATALIA – JOURNAL/ Weeks 1-4]

Some (three) students reacted positively to the pressure (eustress) put on them by their peers' mockery because if they improved their performance, they could avoid feeling bad or humiliated. In order to avoid those negative

feelings, instead of opting for non-participation, these students decided to make their best effort to improve their language proficiency (ideal L2 self). However, their general motivational behaviour in Teacher 1's class did not seem to change because of the teacher's interpersonal skills and feedback approach.

Students' discomfort caused by peers' mockery led to a strained learning environment in which students did not feel any affiliation to the teacher or to their classmates. This result supports Schumann's (1998) observation that language learners' emotional states are not only influenced by the teacher, but also by the interpersonal relations between classmates.

Classroom environments are prone to evoking feelings of weakness and failure (Monroe, 2009). The most recurrent emotion experienced by my study's participants was fear. They expressed being afraid of the teacher, and afraid of their peers' mockery. Fear has been classified as a primary emotion (Ekman, 2003). However, shame and embarrassment are more complex emotions that require self-consciousness (Leitch, 1999). Only one of my participants used the word 'shame' to categorise an emotional event, but three of them mentioned being embarrassed because of being exposed in front of the class. According to Kaufman (1989), '*...to feel shame is to feel seen in a painfully diminished sense*' (p. 17). For Leitch (1999):

Shame is generally viewed as a private, self-conscious experience in which individuals feel that a weakness or vulnerability has been exposed not only to others, but also to themselves, leaving them feeling deficient and humiliated (p. 1).

Although participants might not have been aware, they were in fact ashamed of being seen as not able to speak English, and consequently they felt

humiliated. Shame experiences make students attribute failure to lack of ability, which leads them to diminished feelings of self-worth (Turner and Husman, 2008). Shame can also be experienced when individuals feel they are becoming their undesired selves (Ogilvie, 1987). This suggests that students might have hidden their feelings of shame beneath fear and anger towards the teacher's style and their peers' mockery. It has been found that among the emotions that can inhibit learning English – fear, anger and shame – shame is prone to fostering avoidance and withdrawn behaviour (Cook, 2006). This might explain why students' reactions towards the teacher's teaching style and peers' mockery resulted in avoiding participation in class activities where English was spoken, and in feelings of anger towards the teacher's feedback approach. According to Holodynski and Kronast (2009), shame can lead to either withdrawal from learning tasks or to making a great effort so as not to repeat the failure in the future. This could be the reason why participants revealed being positively and negatively motivated as a result of their emotional experiences in which fear was reported.

### **6.1.3 Analytic category three: The manifestation of negative emotional experiences as positive results**

Participants confirmed that emotional experiences had a significant influence on their motivation. The study findings imply that emotions, both positive and negative, have an important impact on foreign language learners' motivation, since they can activate or deactivate motivational behaviour. As stated by (Pekrun et al., 2002),

...simplistic conceptions of negative emotions as bad and positive emotions as being good should be avoided because positive emotions are sometimes detrimental and negative emotions such as anxiety and shame beneficial (p. 103).

Participants' affective experiences were positive and negative, and the impacts reported were also in these two opposing directions. Two of the participants reflected on this bidirectional impact of a negative emotion:

I didn't understand the teacher's words and I felt so embarrassed in front of my peers that I told myself: *I don't want to continue studying...stop making a fool of yourself!* (screaming). [JIMMY – INTERVIEW]

In a way, anger made me think that I should try to be more...more careful. I mean, I should not be satisfied by doing something basic as the teacher told me. I should try to learn more, use more vocabulary or... I don't know. For example when I watch TV...sometimes I watch some channels in English to try to capture some ideas or when I read...I try to use the phrases I read... I believe anger made me think because that day I was angry and I felt something here (*touching her heart*). [ANGELA – INTERVIEW]

Experiencing both types of emotions was considered significant for students' language learning process since they helped them to regulate learning, as well as to regulate emotions. This is clearly expressed by Natalia in the following reference:

Positive and negative emotions made you think...and ... I mean all good and bad experiences are important. I consider that positive ones motivate me to continue in the degree...even negative emotions are important because, as I told you before, because of those negative experiences you start to set goals in order to overcome those negative experiences, I mean to not make the same mistakes again. Yes, positive and negative emotions influence you and are important for your motivation. [NATALIA – INTERVIEW]

Students' motivational responses to emotional experiences may be a result of the unique interpretation each individual student gives to a specific event (Tse, 2000; Do and Schallert, 2004; Järvenova and Järvelä, 2005; Gläser-Zikuda and FuB, 2008; Garret and Young, 2009).



All (18) students agreed on the beneficial role both type of emotions had on their learning processes. Negative and positive emotions were constantly experienced by students; however, negative ones dominated the 12-week period of the study. Students reported experiencing more negative emotional experiences (444) than positive ones (277).

**Table 6.0: Emotions experienced by students during the term**

<b>Positive</b>	<b>References</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>References</b>
Happy	157	Fearful	103
Calm	44	Worried	83
Excited	25	Nervous	74
Confident	21	Sad	43
Satisfied	14	Angry	32
Relaxed	10	Frustrated	23
Interested	5	Insecure	20
Relieved	1	Anxious	16
		Bored	14
		Stressed	12
		Disappointed	7
		Embarrassed	6
		Confused	3
		Intimidated	3
		Guilty	2
		Unsatisfied	1
		Depressed	1
		Envious	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>444</b>

This result is consistent with Hascher’s (2007) research about well-being in secondary European schools (Germany, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Switzerland), in which students’ emotions were dominated by negative ones in relation to their low achievement in class activities and their lack of feelings of competence. Although Hascher (2007) wanted to see if intense, frequent and long-lasting emotions were related to students’ well-being, the findings were not clear about this. Thus, findings in Hascher’s study suggest that no matter how frequent or how intense an emotion is, if students enjoy and have a positive attitude towards school, the experience of constant,

intense negative emotions seem not to have such a strong impact on students' well-being and learning. I will argue, then, that this may also be the case with motivation, as revealed by my study findings. Although participants in my study experienced more negative than positive emotions, the manifestation of these emotions was positive.

Pekrun's suggests that emotions' effects are mediated by cognitive and motivational mechanisms such as motivation levels, learning strategies, cognitive resources and self-regulation (Pekrun et al., 2002). Thus, positive and negative emotions can activate or deactivate motivational behaviour in students based on the influence of these mechanisms. Following Pekrun's model, participants in my study experienced activating and deactivating emotions which impacted positively and negatively on their motivation. However, the predominance of negative activating emotions (fear, worry and sadness) in this study might have triggered students' motivational behaviour to overcome those negative emotions in future academic tasks, and this might explain their motivation maintenance. It is also likely that the positive activating emotions (happiness, excitement and confidence) experienced in class with Teacher 2 contributed to enhancing the positive effects of the negative experiences undergone in class with Teacher 1. This could also explain why the only negative effect of positive deactivating emotions revealed by participants was 'resting on their laurels', as they reported calmness as the second most experienced positive deactivating emotion.

Negative emotions such as boredom and frustration were found to be a resource for learners' development in a study of the manifestation of emotions in collaborative learning (Imai, 2010). It can be argued, then, that the frequent and sometimes intense negative activating emotions reported to be felt by

participants in my study were not enough to diminish their motivation, since all the participants were revealed to be highly motivated to finish the ELT programme (self-determination). Thus, emotions *per se* are neither good nor bad; the impact of emotions on language learners' motivation in this study relied on the complex individual interactive process each participant had with the emotions experienced. This individualised interaction was positively reinforced by significant others (parents, relatives, boyfriends/girlfriends and friends), who helped participants to regulate these emotions. Emotional self-regulation allowed learners to erase their insecurity and doubts and contributed to reenergising them to continue their learning process. This can explain the opposing responses to negative and positive emotions.

Negative deactivating emotions had the negative effect of causing demotivating behaviour in some students, such as risk avoidance and lack of class participation, which is consistent with the results found by Meyer and Turner (2006). However, students revealed that negative activating emotions led them to reflect on the situation experienced, which allowed them to re-evaluate the event and adjust their motivation accordingly (motivational retrospection). The reflection process described by participants included an attribution stage in which learners gave themselves an explanation (attribution) of why the event resulted in that emotion. According to Weiner (1992), attributions cause emotions which shape future behaviours (motivational energy). Participants' attributions of their negative emotions related to the teacher's interpersonal skills, their own English level, their peers mocking and the economic pressures they were going through. As suggested by Williams and Burden (1999), individual attributions are formed by an interplay of internal feelings, language level, external influences and the learners' context.

Participants of this study realised that although there were many factors influencing the way they reacted to emotional experiences, they could only change future similar events by improving their language level. As students attributed these negative feelings to their language proficiency, they immediately resorted to the use of learning strategies that helped them face negative emotions and kept them motivated (actional stage). I believe this realisation during the reflection process is the one that led students to focus on those areas they needed to improve in order to enhance their language learning process (action control). Thus, although negative deactivating emotions had an immediate negative effect on students' motivational energy, causing such behaviour as task avoidance and withdrawal from class participation, subsequent reflection allowed students to overcome that negative impact and to reenergise in order to continue their learning process (eustress). Efklides and Petkaki (2005) support this perspective when they assert that both positive and negative moods are important for the learning process, since a positive mood promotes creative thinking and a willingness to take risks, while a negative mood promotes careful and analytical processing.

The positive activating emotions experienced while in class with Teacher 2 could explain why students reported being motivated to learn and advance in their language learning process, which was different to the motivation they reported when referring to a negative experience while in class with Teacher 1. Could it be that the positive activating emotions experienced in class with Teacher 2 helped them to minimise the negative effects of negative deactivating emotions experienced in class with Teacher 1? While some students reported motivated behaviour to finish the ELT programme because of socio-economic and cultural factors, some (six) also revealed having developed intrinsic motivation because of Teacher 2's motivational approach.

Positive deactivating emotions can be detrimental for a period of time after completing a task. However, these deactivating emotions can also be beneficial in the long-term because they can contribute to motivating students to invest more effort in future class activities (Pekrun et al., 2002). I consider that in this study these positive deactivating emotions acted as reinforcers of learners' feelings of self-efficacy, since after completing a task with a level of success and feeling relieved, students were reassured that success was a matter of effort and not of ability (appraisal). With regard to negative deactivating emotions, most students reported that their fear, nervousness and frustration were because they had not taken extracurricular English classes in their previous school years, which differentiated them from their more advanced classmates. These became activating emotions (eustress) when participants reassured themselves that it was a matter of time needed to acquire more vocabulary and structures and to feel confident when interacting in English (actional stage).

An explanation for the pervasive predominance of negative emotions could be the language level participants had during the study period. Students who agreed to take part in the study were beginners (except for David), mixed with a group of five or six advanced students, who dominated class participation. Thus, participants focused on the negative emotions caused by not being as fluent and confident when speaking English as their classmates. The participants' level of English created in them doubts, anxiety, worry and fear of not being able to master a pattern of sounds different from their mother tongue. In a study that explored students' motivational beliefs, De Groot (2002) found that:

... poorer students seemed to be much more susceptible to or under the control of environmental factors such as the teacher's behaviour, whether they liked the teacher, others' behaviour in the classroom, and the nature of the classroom tasks (p. 44).

However, the only advanced student who agreed to take part in the study revealed having experienced the same negative emotions while in class with Teacher 1. Thus, this contradicts that idea that the language level of students is the major determinant of negative emotions, and confirms the pervasive influence of teachers on learners' emotions and motivation in foreign language instruction (Guilloteaux and Dörnyei, 2008).

Teachers' motivational practice could be another explanation for the frequent and constant experience of negative emotions. Most negative feelings were due to a teacher's interpersonal skills and feedback approach. Students reported more events happening in this particular class than in any other class, so it is not surprising that negative emotions clearly predominated in this study. Negative emotions caused by Teacher 1 were detrimental to students' learning and motivation because they made students doubtful about their capacities, fearful of the feedback provided and frustrated because of the non-humanistic teaching approach she was exercising.

This particular group embraced negative emotions as an opportunity to grow as foreign language learners. Negative emotions allowed students to realise that they needed to be more active in their language learning process (dynamic disequilibrium). Students started to develop language learning awareness which pushed them to diversify their learning approaches, and made them more responsible, which was very positive for their motivation. Learning awareness led students to look for diverse strategies with which to

approach their language learning, as they realised they needed to make an effort to be able to interact with peers and teachers in classroom activities. This result is consistent with Zhang and Head's (2010) study on learner reticence, which found that learning awareness is the first step to success as students begin to take more responsibility for their language learning.

The development of strategies may have also been caused by the need to get good marks in examinations so they could advance in the degree, because if they failed a course, they would have to wait a year before they could take it again (motivational influence). This fact may have also urged students to try to tackle the problems they were facing early in the term so they did not have to be in the position of finishing the degree in more than four years. I believe the university regulations pushed students to find a solution to their learning difficulties. This supports Lieberman and Remedios' (2007) observation that external pressures, such as administrative procedures, influence students' goals and, consequently, their motivational behaviour.

Students started to diversify their learning approaches by using learning strategies that helped them to face their current concerns and to boost their motivation. With the implementation of learning strategies, motivational strategies were also exercised from the very first weeks of the term. Students realised they needed to be encouraged in order to maintain their energy to finish the course and consequently the degree. Although students recognised that their families played an essential role in their motivational levels, some started to exercise their own motivational strategies as they were living alone for the first time. Negative emotional experiences forced students to reflect on their learning, as expressed by some learners:

Well...a negative emotion leads you to analysis...happiness...um, there is nothing to analyse there because you are happy as you obtained what you wanted, but negative experiences are the ones we need to think about, reflect on and look for the positive side of. You have to look for that positive side in order to be more proactive or a winner, we can say in that respect. [JIMMY – INTERVIEW]

Reflection allowed students to develop a sense of responsibility towards their language learning process, which proved to be beneficial for it. This was surprising because at that age it is not common to find this sense of responsibility in many Mexican students. Students seemed to have developed this sense of responsibility by realising their need to be better prepared and deciding which areas they needed to work on first (dynamic disequilibrium). Reflection after negative affective experiences was a powerful tool for these students' transformational processing of negative experiences into positive motivational energy (motivational retrospection). It seems that the interplay of students' emotions, the reflection process, learning awareness and the social context contributed to the development of resilience towards negative experiences.

The fact that students took control of their learning by using different learning strategies provided them with control not only over the skills they wanted to work on first, but also over experiencing success when they were able to complete a task that gave them feelings of competence, arousing their interest and motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000). By exercising control over their learning process, students also regulated the negative emotions they were experiencing. The regulation of emotions has been found to be an integral aspect of language learners' affective experiences (Bown and White, 2010).



It seems contradictory that, although some (nine) students reported not having chosen the ELT programme at the university as their first choice, they were struggling hard in order to continue in the course in spite of their constant negative experiences. However, from the perspective of self-determination theory, Mexican participants may have internalised as their own the demands of their parents and relatives to whom they feel a very strong attachment. As suggested by Bao and Lam (2008), 'People from collectivistic cultures may still be motivated when they act on the demands of in-group others because they can internalize such demands' (p. 270).

Thus, students seemed to have developed emotional resilience by being mature enough to state that it was their responsibility not to allow these negative experiences to have a great impact on their motivation because that would only obstruct their success. Negative experiences led students to exercise self-encouragement and motivational strategies which had the function of reenergising them, allowing them to cope with the demands of their foreign language learning process. By exercising motivational strategies, students were able to have some control over the positive and negative experiences they were going through in their English classes. As suggested by the literature, students tend to be more intrinsically motivated when they develop their competence through self-regulated efforts (Noels et al., 1999).

Students' emotional accounts show the process of working with their emotions in their language learning journey which allowed students to realise that they had to be able to manage those negative emotional reactions in order to succeed. Hurd (2008) also supports that emotions '...can help build awareness of the process of learning and help learners identify what personally motivates or inhibits their own learning' (p. 222). Although the

writing task feedback incident was a critical experience for most students, it was the first step in the process of making them aware of their responsibility in their learning process (dynamic disequilibrium). Students immediately looked for ways to overcome the negative feelings and, thus, developed learning and motivational strategies that allowed them to cope with the demands imposed on them in this new phase of their learning process.

Students' perception of learning English as an ability they could develop helped them to look for ways to improve it (appraisal). Some students reported having being successful in their previous academic experiences, so those successful experiences might have helped them to embrace language learning as a challenge they could meet (Bandura, 1997). This was an important starting point for these students because by realising the need to take an active role in their language learning process, they started to develop a sense of responsibility towards it.

By exercising reflection students were able to see the whole picture of their lives and future goals (motivational retrospection). By considering all the aspects that had brought them to university, students were more focused on improving as language learners in order to fulfil their other goals in life. I consider this interplay between negative emotions and reflection as the core element of maintaining this particular group's motivation throughout the whole term. Students were extrinsically and intrinsically motivated, as reported in the study data. Students diversified their learning approaches and tried to make their best effort in order to continue in the degree and finish it, so they could fulfil personal and filial goals (ought to self). I believe intrinsic motivation in this particular group was developed by the humanistic approach exercised by Teacher 2, which developed their interest and motivation in language learning,

while their moral obligations kept them motivated not in terms of language learning but to obtain a university degree in order to move on to employment (ought to self).

This study gave students the opportunity to work with their emotions. As stated by some students, this was something new and difficult for them. However, they recognised that they had developed resilience towards negative experiences and had started to look for the positive side of them, which I believe is going to be a skill they will be able to exercise in all aspects of their lives, and which will make them stronger and more successful human beings. The decisive role of emotions in foreign language motivation is evident in the effect that positive and negative emotions had on participants in my study. It is paramount, then, for teachers to be aware of emotions' role in language learning processes so they can help students minimise the impact of emotions detrimental to their motivation and promote those that can help them to maintain this.

There were different aspects that came together to create positive outcomes from negative experiences in this particular group, including their peers' language proficiency level, the administrative procedures regarding failing courses, and the students' self-determination to finish their degree. This remarkable determination to succeed is underpinned by the students' social context.

#### **6.1.4 Analytic category four: The influence of the social context on Mexican students' emotional experiences and motivation**

The social context has been recognised as a powerful determinant of students' attributions and emotions (Williams and Burden, 1999; Pekrun et al., 2002). Thus, the social environment in which this particular study was carried out can offer some insights into the impact of emotions on foreign language learners' motivation. Students were from a low socio-economic class and studying at a Mexican state university. In Mexico, education is highly valued and access to university education is obtained through an ability test. By being able to obtain a place at the state university, students knew they were in the position of fulfilling a dream (ideal L2 self), not only for themselves but also for their families (ought to self). The strong bond with parents, siblings and relatives was a constant enhancer to students' motivation when experiencing a negative emotion. Thus, Mexico being considered a collectivist society (Hofstede, 2010) it is not surprising that participants' motivation was shaped by the society's values and regulations.

With Mexico being a country in development, Mexicans are pushed from their early years to see education as a means to emancipation and financial security. Most students in the study were from a low socio-economic level, which may have given them some unpleasant experiences in their lives, as well as the strength to be able to cope with negative experiences. These life encounters may have contributed to making them stronger when going through difficult times and, consequently, the negative experiences were considered as another challenge they had to overcome in order to succeed in life. It might be that the environment of scarcity in their lives had given them the extra push to try to maintain their motivation at good levels, so they could

finish a university degree that would allow them to secure a better economic future, not only for themselves but also for their families (ought to self). The benefits a student expects from getting a university degree have been found to be a source of motivation (Beard et al., 2007).

The moral responsibility towards parents and the elder family members in Mexican culture proved to be a great determinant of students' motivation maintenance to obtain a university degree and succeed in life. This result was surprising since negative emotions in educational settings are considered detrimental to students' motivation. However, the socio-cultural setting seemed to have positively modified the effects of Mexican language learners' negative affective experiences. These findings support Ryan and Deci's (2000) affirmation that the social environments in which people develop are crucial determinants of the enhancement or diminishment of motivation.

The family situations described below may have contributed to instilling in students the drive to make their best effort while in class and to turn negative experiences into a positive motivational energy that kept them trying.

For Veronica, the opportunity of getting a university degree is a means to help her parents in the future. She is the younger daughter, who is traditionally supposed to take care of her parents in their elderly years. As she knows there are no jobs in her parents' rural setting, her degree will allow her to go to the northern part of the region where she will have more opportunities to get a good job in the touristic sector. Thus, by getting a university degree she will be able to go away from the rural setting in which she grew up, and will be able to have the economic resources to take care of her parents in their later years.

Blanca told me about her struggle to concentrate in class after working for eight hours every afternoon as a domestic helper in a house. She is also from a rural background and has to work in order to be able to pay her rent. Although her parents help her, the money is not enough to pay for all her expenses in the regional capital city. By finishing her degree, Blanca will have the opportunity to change not only her but also her family's living conditions.

Jimmy was suffering from being away from his mother because he knew that she was making an effort to send him to university. He mentioned how he had to think all the time about ways to stretch the money that was given to him every week in order to make it last. He attributed a specific event in which he was not able to understand what the teacher was asking him to do to his worries about the economic pressures his whole family was under.

As described, the socio-economic level of students has forced them to look for the positive in the negative since, as some of them expressed in their final interviews, negative experiences are going to be present during their whole lives. Therefore, they have to try to see the positive in the negative in order to be able to cope with the different demands they will have to face, not only at university but also in their future lives.

This may not be true for students in other parts of the country, for example in Mexico City, where students are being raised in a different environment, where the pace of life is faster than in the interior of the country and where other values have replaced family values. However, the need to reenergise this core family value in some urban Mexican families seems to have led to the current campaign in the Mexican media entitled 'everything is better with your family', where a strong emphasis is placed on the need to return to

traditional family values in order to preserve this sense of closeness and belonging and to eradicate the social problems currently affecting Mexican society.

For most Mexicans, the only way to get a better lifestyle is to go to university, finish a degree and get a good (well-paid) job. It is considered that people who do not go to university are worth less, or worse, are 'nobody'. Being 'somebody' equals having a university degree and getting a good job. It is a norm we have integrated as our own (Ryan and Deci, 2000). This cultural value that has been transmitted from our early years is reflected in Jane's words:

.....Well...I feel it is me. Even though they were encouraging me, if I don't feel like doing it... I won't do it. I think it is also me who doesn't want to be without a university degree, without...um....I mean being nobody. I want to be someone...and the only one that can help that to happen is me.... [JANE – INTERVIEW]

This cultural commitment is not only about being 'someone' but about being someone who can financially help family or parents in the future (ought to self). Although in the past males were the only ones supposed to have this responsibility, times have changed and Mexico is becoming a matriarchy. According to the newspaper *El Universal* (08/03/2010), one out of five Mexican homes are sustained by women. The number of single mothers has also increased because of divorce or men abandoning women for diverse reasons, such as immigration to the USA. Women have had to enter the labour market to sustain their families, and beliefs about women's abilities and obligations have widened. This seems to be the case in Natalia's experience:

.....Well....my family...my parents. I think those are the ones who have led me to continue in the degree. Also because my parents want me to have a profession ...and yes...I think that it is why.... [NATALIA – INTERVIEW]

Although in the past parents preferred their daughters to remain at home or perhaps allowed their daughters to register in short courses at technical institutes to become secretaries or nurses while waiting to find a husband to support them, times have changed, and this can be evidenced by the growing number of mothers who are the only breadwinners in many families in Mexico.

The study participants' mothers especially may have not have had the opportunity to study at university level because women of their generation were raised to become housewives and entrance to university was reserved for a reduced number of women. This is reflected in Jane's words about her mother's reaction to her being admitted to university:

I think the simple fact of being someone one day...for example I am the youngest child, I have four brothers but they are all older...but even though they are older, I was the first one to go to university...the first in the family...I am the only one who never had to suspend for a year because of failing some subjects or something else...and for instance my mum...when I found out I had been accepted...it was extremely bizarre because a week before taking my university entrance test, my mum had an accident and I was in hospital with her the whole time...I did not have time to review for the test...and when I went to take the test, I was nervous because I thought I was going to fail it...I was doing the test and I felt really bad...my mum was ill and I thought I would not be able to get a place...I was not going to be accepted... and when the results came out and I saw my name on the lists...my mum was really happy, my dad also and my brothers...and for example my uncles called to see how my mum was doing and the first words my mum would say when answering their calls were "Jane got into university" and this and that...and I think my parents had motivated me... they expect something else from me...and this has led me to really want to finish the degree and make an effort... [JANE – INTERVIEW]

This extract shows the strong bond Mexicans have with their families. In Mexican families individual decisions are considered by all family members



before a final one is taken. It is not surprising that these students feel that their family members have an important role in keeping them motivated by giving them support and, most of all, the confidence they need to continue making their best possible effort.

There is a common saying in Mexico that, in order to succeed, it doesn't matter how capable you are, what really matters is that '*tienes que creértela*' (you have to believe it). I have not encountered a Mexican who is not told by his or her parents that he or she can succeed. Mexicans never tell their sons or daughters that they cannot do something. On the contrary, even though they may know a child is not as capable as others, parents will always encourage or push them by saying that they can, and Mexicans grow up with this.

An example of this familial encouragement is those students who had the intention of studying something different but had to choose the ELT programme because of the lack of financial resources to go and study what they really wanted in a different location. These students were very self-determined to continue and finish the degree, as revealed by Natalia:

...this is not what I wanted to study since I was a child...um...I always wanted to be a maths teacher ...but ...well...I think that just by the fact of getting a university degree...but yes, I like it.  
[NATALIA – INTERVIEW]

Although these students were having doubts and feeling that the task of learning English was very difficult, they all agreed that it was their responsibility not to allow those negative experiences to have such a great impact on their motivation because that would only obstruct their way to

succeed in getting a university degree (ideal L2 self). This was clearly expressed in the following quote:

...like scolding myself...like why do you think those things if you can or have the ability to learn these things...and I say to myself, come on, you are overreacting! It is not going to happen again, come on...more than anything realising that emotion and using that situation...like...I do it to show to myself that yes, I can do it, in case that same situation happens again, I am going to be able to react in a different way...it is not going to be a negative emotion anymore... [KENYA – INTERVIEW]

*The difficult life experiences these participants have faced might have shaped their way of seeing life and their attitude towards negative situations. Kenya recognised that some people may have reacted differently to these situations. She says that it is up to oneself not to let those negative experiences get one down, and to come out of one's depression and show others that one is as capable as anyone else.*

The moral and economic responsibilities imposed by participants' socio-economic context contributed to enhancing their motivational energy. Securing a better economic future is not only a sign of success but also a way of being able to face economic responsibilities in the future towards parents or relatives. The socio-economic context and the moral responsibilities imposed on Mexican students may have contributed to transforming the experience of negative emotions into a force that motivated students to achieve the goal not only of passing a course, but of obtaining a university degree which holds the key to social success. This result is similar to that found in the context of China, where students choose schools based on the belief that these will allow them to meet their filial obligations (Chen et al., 2005).

## **6.2 Summary**

This chapter has sought to discuss the findings of the research, and to place them within context of the relevant literature on humanistic education, motivation and emotions in language learning. Some of the discussion has been reflected the literature and this has added to the body of knowledge on the role of emotions in foreign language learning motivation. The following chapter will introduce the main conclusions and the implications for practice drawn out from the study findings.

# **Chapter 7**

## **Implications for foreign language teaching practice**

### **7.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the conclusions and the implications for foreign language teaching practice drawn out from the study findings. The chapter begins with a discussion of the conclusions derived from the study findings in relation to the L2 motivational theories reviewed in Chapter Three. Then, the implications for foreign language teachers are presented. Although students reacted individually to the emotional events they experienced over the term, there are many aspects of foreign language instruction that can help students boost their motivation and reduce the experience of emotions that can be detrimental to their motivational energy. I hope that the ideas presented in this chapter may serve as a basis for some suggestions related to EFL teaching.

### **7.1 Emotions in foreign language learning motivation**

This study has explored the emotional experiences of EFL learners in Mexico. The purpose of this research has been to provide insights into the effects of emotions on EFL learners' motivation. Participants in the study revealed that emotions play a crucial role in foreign language learning motivation. Although learners reported that emotions can impact on students' motivation in a

positive or negative way, negative emotions were revealed to be positive motivational enhancers for Mexican EFL learners. Another significant outcome from the study is the effective management of negative experiences by Mexican EFL learners, as all of them turned negative experiences into positive self-regulatory strategies that enhanced their motivation to succeed. A key factor in the transformation of negative experiences into positive motivational energy is the Mexican cultural and social background.

Students' emotional experiences showed that there are as many external factors as internal ones impacting on their motivation. Since external factors are beyond a teacher's scope, internal factors can be addressed by teachers in order to influence students' motivation in a positive way since, as suggested by Dörnyei (2007), '...the motivating character of the learning context can be enhanced through conscious intervention by the language teacher' (p. 720). As pointed out in the account and discussion chapters, students' positive and negative emotions were engendered by the teacher, their classmates, the learning environment created by the relationships among them, and the social context.

The discussion of the conclusions derived from the study findings is presented in relation to the L2 motivation theories presented in Chapter Three: the L2 process-oriented model (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998), the motivational strategies proposal (Dörnyei, 2001a), and the L2 motivational L2 self-system (Dörnyei, 2005).

Participants in my study provided evidence that the three stages of the process-oriented model (Dörnyei and Ottó 1998) were reflected in their language learning process. Participants also revealed that different

motivational influences were affecting their motivation during the 12-week period of the study (executive motivation). Although these influences were lowering their motivation, the students' incredible ability to keep themselves motivated during this stage stands out. The participants' motivation was largely instrumental, an orientation that has been considered not to be effective (Gardner, 1985); however, in the Mexican tertiary education context it proved to be as powerful as an integrative orientation. As discussed in Chapter Three, an integrative orientation may not be relevant for EFL learners who are not learning in an English-speaking country, since most of them would not be able to live in an English-speaking country or interact with English speakers.

Participants' provided evidence that the three basic conditions necessary to develop intrinsic motivation in learners suggested by Dörnyei's motivational strategies proposal (2001a) i.e., appropriate teacher behaviours, a pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the classroom and a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms, were not present and, consequently, intrinsic motivation was not engendered in Teacher 1's class. Due to the lack of these three basic conditions to develop intrinsic motivation in foreign language learners there was no support for any learning and the class environment deteriorated day after day.

Participants also provided evidence of the L2 motivational self system proposed by Dörnyei (2005). The Ideal L2 self and Ought to self were identifiable in participants' references to wanting to 'become someone', reflecting the fear that they had of not being able to finish the degree and not being able to get a well-paid job. Although Dörnyei (2009) conceives of the Ideal L2 self as the strongest motivator of the L2 Self system, participants in

my study revealed that the Ought to self was also a very strong motivator. Thus, both dimensions of the system seem to be strong motivators in language learning processes in the Mexican tertiary education context.

The conclusions drawn from the study findings presented in Chapter 5 are as follows:

1. Teachers' interpersonal skills have a great impact on students' motivation levels and their maintenance.
2. A lack of cohesion and collaboration between students can have negative effects on students' motivation.
3. Mexican students have the remarkable capacity to turn negative emotions and events into positive learning strategies, thus enhancing their motivation to succeed.
4. Their cultural and social background forces Mexican students to find in negative events a positive side so they can keep their motivation levels high.
5. The value given to university education in Mexican society is so high that students are motivated to succeed in subject areas that are not their first choice.

#### **7.1.1 Conclusion 1: Teachers' interpersonal skills have a great impact on students' motivation levels and their maintenance.**

Although there were many diverse factors impacting on students' motivational energy, the teacher was revealed as the main source of students' feelings and emotions over the study period. My study showed that the teacher's interpersonal skills, nonverbal communication and feedback approach had a crucial effect on student participation in class activities and on motivation. The

emotions engendered by these aspects in class with Teacher 1 contributed to the development of a very negative learning environment that proved not to be beneficial for the participants' emotional well-being.

Dörnyei (2001a, p. 27) raises the question: whose job is it to improve motivation? Without doubt, participants' experiences revealed that in classroom instruction, teachers need to exercise certain techniques to motivate EFL learners. Participants of this study were in the 'executive motivation' stage of the L2 process-oriented model (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998); however, the decision to be there was not individually taken in all cases, since some students registered for the ELT programme because of their parents' economic limitations or due to familial decisions. Thus, the fact that it was not their own desire and wish to be in the ELT programme also influenced the way they reacted towards Teacher 1's interpersonal skills. Not only those students who were in the ELT programme because it was their dream to become teachers overcame the effects of the teacher's attitude but also those who were there because of financial limitations or parents' desires. It seemed that the future vision of being 'someone' moderated the classroom's negative environmental influences, and their motivation was not affected.

#### **7.1.2 Conclusion two: A lack of cohesion and collaboration between students can have negative effects on students' motivation.**

This study has revealed that not only was the teacher-student relationship a bad one but that relations were also very strained among the learners. In Mexico, at all educational levels, students attend courses in class groups. Some groups stay in the same classroom for the whole school day so they are supposed to develop a strong group bond; however, at the Mayche University



class groups can include students from different terms due to administrative regulations or students failing the course more than once. Although students expressed that they had been with some of the members of the group in previous classes, most of them formed small groups within the wider group which made cohesion very difficult, as some reported not having good relationships with members of other subgroups. Thus, the group was fragmented into small groups where members supported the bad relations between other members and some of their classmates, making group bonding impossible.

This lack of cohesion prevented students from working collaboratively, since most of them felt insecure and uncomfortable when working with the classmates they did not have good relationships with. Members of subgroups were hostile towards members of other subgroups, which seemed to have created resistance and competition between the members of the class. This negatively affected not only the learning environment but also learners' motivation because they were not working cooperatively and collaboratively in order to foster belongingness and connectedness with their classmates, which are conditions for the development of intrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000, Dörnyei, 2001a). Instead, they competed against other groups in order to demonstrate which group was more intelligent or able in the English language. As a result, no relatedness among the members of the wider group was promoted, and this contributed to the experience of negative emotions which influenced learners' unmotivated behaviour on this particular course. Students seemed not to share ideas or participate in pair or group activities, and found it difficult to work with each other. This confirms Ushioda's (2003) observation that it is not only the teacher who influences learners' emotions

and motivation but also the relationship created among the members of a group.

The classroom climate was not only stressful for learners but for the teacher as well, and although students recognised the teacher as a good professional, the environment created because of the bad relationship between the teacher and the students and among the students did not contribute to making foreign language learning an enjoyable and effective process.

Developing group cohesion is a crucial step that teachers need to be aware of in order to maintain students' motivation in a class and make the learning environment enjoyable for students (Dörnyei, 1998, 2001a, 2007; Chang, 2010). Teachers as leaders in a classroom have the power to motivate students by providing them with a positive learning environment in which they feel confident and willing to make mistakes. It is necessary that teachers promote students getting to know each other in order to encourage positive affiliations so learners feel at ease when participating in class. This is of particular importance at beginner levels where students are getting used to a new pattern of sounds which can cause them anxiety to speak in front of peers. Participants in the study revealed that there was no interaction in class activities as most students were afraid to make mistakes in front of their peers.

The paramount importance of promoting cohesiveness in an English course is highlighted in students' references. It seems that learning was not happening in this class as students' minds were invaded by fear of their peers' mockery in learning activities. The constant fear students experienced in class left no space for language learning, as their minds were focused on their feelings and not on their learning process. This is crucial for language learning because the

nature of the subject content makes the process a very sensitive one in which students are more exposed to feelings of humiliation or embarrassment.

**7.1.3 Conclusion 3: Mexican students have the remarkable capacity to turn negative emotions and events into positive learning strategies, thus enhancing their motivation to succeed.**

Although participants in this study were constantly experiencing negative emotions during classroom instruction, students' perception of learning English as an ability they could develop helped them to look for ways to improve. Some students reported having been successful in their previous academic experiences so those self-efficacy experiences might have helped them to embrace language learning as a challenge they could meet (Bandura, 1997). This was an important starting point for these students because by realising the need to take an active role in their language learning process, they started to develop a sense of responsibility towards it.

Although negative emotions were a constant while in class with Teacher 1, students were also experiencing positive emotions in Teacher 2's class. These positive emotions may have helped students to overcome negative experiences since most of them were attributed to their low language level. During journal writing students reported having realised that their emotions were helping them to identify that language learning needed investment. Language learning awareness made them reflect and as a result they resorted to the use of learning and motivational strategies. Participants provided evidence that motivational retrospection (the third stage of the process-oriented model) is an important stage of the learning process since it allows learners to form causal attributions and reinforce their positive self-concepts.

All (18) students exercised emotional self-regulation, and this was a very helpful motivational strategy for their learning process since it empowered them to erase those negative feelings caused by their low proficiency level. I believe this made students turn negative emotions into motivational energy since they realised that they needed to change similar events in the future and that the way to do this was to improve their language level. Students set certain goals regarding vocabulary and grammar structure in order to gain more confidence. By achieving these goals, learners' self-concepts improved. Realising that they were able to prevent themselves from experiencing negative emotions, the students' transformational process started. This process was initiated by their reflections and supported by the classroom climate in class with Teacher 2, and by the Mexican context. Participants provided evidence that the generation of tasks during the 'executive motivation' stage of the process-oriented model (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998), allows learners to continuously evaluate their progress and exercise self-regulatory strategies to protect and maintain their motivation.

**7.1.4 Conclusion four: Their cultural and social background forces Mexican students to find in negative events a positive side so they can keep their motivation levels high.**

The socio-economic context of Mexico played a crucial role in students' motivation. The students' cultural, historical and socio-economical heritage, including factors such as immigration to the USA, which has caused families to be separated and to experience very difficult situations, may be unique to this context. The scarcity of employment and the need to be well prepared in order to compete for well-paid jobs in the touristic sector may have boosted students' motivation because of the future opportunities they will have after

obtaining a university degree. Chen et al. (2005) labelled the Chinese cultural motivator revealed in their study as the *Chinese Imperative*. Thus, we may similarly speak here of a 'Mexican imperative'.

Negative emotional experiences proved to be beneficial for students' language learning because these made them aware that they had to invest time and effort in order to fulfil their dreams of speaking as fluently as their peers. Comparisons with peers boosted students' creativity to diversify their language learning techniques. Although negative emotional experiences can be considered detrimental to foreign language learning motivation, the particular setting in which this study was carried out made students embrace negative experiences as an opportunity to grow as language learners. Students' negative emotions were the initial stage of a transformational process in which students self-regulated and managed not only their emotions, but their learning as well. The process, as revealed by students' references, proved to be not only beneficial for their motivation, but also for their self-concept as they experienced more feelings of self-efficacy through having this sense of control over their emotions.

Participants' emotional experiences provide evidence that the L2 Ideal self and L2 Ought to self are powerful enhancers of motivational behaviour for EFL learners. Students described that in spite of the feelings of fear experienced because of the proficient speaking skills of a classmate, having a vision of themselves speaking as fluently as their classmate helped them to maintain their motivation during difficult situations (L2 Ideal self). In addition, the expectations placed on the study participants by parents and close relatives proved to be a strong determinant in keeping their motivational energy high so

they could finish the degree and fulfil future familial obligations (L2 Ought to self).

**7.1.5 Conclusion five: The value given to university education in Mexican society is so high that students are motivated to succeed in subject areas that are not their first choice.**

Half of the study participants revealed in their personal narratives having wanted to study something different, but because of financial reasons, they had to choose a degree course at the Mayche University. This fact contributed greatly to causing students' doubts, as they questioned their abilities to learn a foreign language after receiving their first writing task feedback. Doubts were not only generated in those who had chosen the degree as a second option but also in those who had chosen it as their desired degree. However, those students who had had the intention of studying something different, but had had to choose the ELT programme because of a lack of financial resources to go and study what they really wanted in a different location, were nonetheless very determined to continue and finish the degree.

These (nine) students were making efforts to erase negative feelings and motivate themselves to continue in the ELT programme. I consider that the high value given to obtaining a university degree as a means of self-worth and success has been instilled so deeply in Mexican students from their very early years that most of them have integrated this value as their own (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Thus, these students considered that having a university degree was a goal they had set for themselves. I believe this integrated value of obtaining a university degree is what makes participants in this study to be self-determined to succeed in finishing the ELT programme in spite of it not having been their first choice. Students' self-determination proved to be a

strong enhancer to their high motivational levels during the study.

It can be argued that students have a vision of themselves succeeding in their goal of becoming 'someone' and getting a university degree, as suggested by the L2 motivational self system (Dörnyei, 2005). Participants in this study were always referring to the future expectations their parents and close relatives had of them. Although, Dörnyei (2009) considers that the Ought to self does not lead learners to motivational practices, participants in my study provide evidence that this dimension of the L2 motivational self system can be a strong enhancer of motivational behaviour. I believe that this dimension was more important than the L2 Ideal self because of the context in which this study was carried out. As mentioned before, Mexican culture has proven to be a strong enhancer of EFL learners' motivation.

Students' self-determination led them to reflect and this proved to be very beneficial for students' motivational levels. Their self-determination also led them to exercise emotional self-regulation to overcome the negative feelings experienced during an unpleasant event and to keep their motivational energy.

Participants in my study provide evidence that the third stage of the L2 process-oriented model in which students evaluate their performance in the different tasks done was a space for reflection. Reflection was a powerful tool that allowed students to look for the positive lessons in those negative experiences. By exercising reflection, students were able to see the whole picture of their lives and future goals. By considering all the aspects that had brought them to university, students were more focused on improving as language learners in order to fulfil their other goals in life. I consider this interplay between emotions and reflection along with cultural aspects as the

core element in maintaining this particular group motivated throughout the whole term (motivational retrospection). Students were extrinsically and intrinsically motivated as reported in the study data. Students diversified their learning approaches and tried to make their best efforts in order to continue in the degree and finish it, as this would allow them to fulfil personal and filial goals (self-regulatory strategies). I believe intrinsic motivation in this particular group was developed through an affective humanistic approach exercised by Teacher 2, which developed their interest and motivation in language learning. Students' motivation towards the goal of finishing the degree in order to move on to employment and be able to fulfil their moral obligations kept them motivated not only in terms of language learning but in terms of obtaining a university degree.

Students' self-determination led them to develop emotional resilience by being mature enough to state that it was their responsibility not to allow those negative experiences to have such a great impact on their motivation because that would only obstruct their path to success. Students' emotional reflections show the process of working with their emotions in education that allowed students to realise that they had to be able to manage those negative emotional reactions in their language learning process in order to be successful. Although negative emotions were hard to deal with, they had a positive effect on students' motivation since the experience of negative events allowed the students to reflect and develop motivational strategies that proved to be beneficial for them.

In spite of facing diverse negative situations during the study, students never lost their determination to succeed. On the contrary, it seems as if negative emotions aroused the students' strength and made them more active in their



language learning process. The fact of realising that a group of students in class were more prepared than them instilled in the participants the desire to be at the same level. Students' determination to speak as fluently as the advanced students in the group made them exercise self-encouragement after a negative experience. Negative experiences led students to develop motivational strategies which had the function of reenergising them so they could cope with the demands of their foreign language learning process. By exercising motivational strategies students were able to have some control over the positive and negative experiences they were going through in their English classes.

There were different aspects that combined to result in the positive outcome of negative experiences in this particular group: peers' language proficiency level, students' self-determination to finish the degree and the socio-cultural context. As stated by some students, emotional awareness was something new and difficult for them. However, they recognised having developed resilience towards negative experiences and starting to see their positive side, which I believe is going to be a skill they will be able to exercise in all aspects of their lives and which will make them stronger and more successful human beings.

#### **7.1.6 A critical personal reflection on the research process**

My personal journey in this research process has been inundated with emotional reactions. Finding a way to address my research topic was sometimes difficult but at the same time an enjoyable experience. Having decided that the best way to tackle my research interests was through a qualitative approach, I was confused and overwhelmed by the vast amount of

information about this research paradigm. Reading about criteria for evaluation, validity, trustworthiness and various other qualitative terms made me afraid that I would not be able to do a piece of research that could be considered good.

Writing my autoethnography was a difficult process, but it raised my awareness about the topic I was going to research. The ongoing reflection while doing my autoethnography made me realise that it was a suitable tool, not only to understand my emotions, but also my participants' inner feelings. I had not encountered the concept of ethics while doing research, nor had I read about subjectivity and objectivity. I was puzzled by all this terminology and seriously concerned about how to be able to carry out a trustworthy piece of research. After being satisfied with my research design, I started my data collection process, which was, from the very beginning, illustrative of some of the topics I had read about. However, I decided to put my research process account aside because I was pressured to finish my thesis in three years due to my sponsors' regulations. Although I wrote a journal during the data collection period, I did not pay very much attention to my own emotional reactions about my evolving understanding of what doing qualitative research meant and how was I experiencing all the stages and tensions inherent in the qualitative adventure.

My first real encounter with ethics in research was during the two weeks in which I first interacted with students. I had no problems in letting students know I was part of the university staff, since they did not know me because they had started their ELT programme when I had already started my PhD studies. However, there were some ethical implications inherent in conducting the research in my own workplace, which I had not foreseen. Being an insider

has implications in terms of confidentiality and anonymity because the identity of the research setting could be identified by someone reading the thesis. Additionally, I had not foreseen that the information participants would be giving me through their journals would make me feel that I was a traitor. Although the teachers reflected in participants' references may not be easy to identify by readers of this thesis because details of their subject areas and years of service have not been disclosed, having access to participants' inner feelings about some of my colleagues made me felt very uncomfortable.

The information about my colleagues that participants provided made me feel sad and worried. I felt I was unintentionally committing betrayal, not only to my colleagues, but also to the institution that had provided me with the space to grow professionally. Although my autoethnography made me aware of the sensitivity of the topic, I had never thought of the threat my research might pose to the colleague who gave me access to her classroom space. I now realise that my research may have put a lot of pressure on her. Did she feel pressured to portray herself as an authoritarian teacher? Was the uncertainty of not being able to know anything about participants' responses a negative influence on her classroom environment? I felt very constrained when data was collected because I could not discuss any of the information provided to me through participants' journals. This made my data collection period so uncomfortable that I avoided going to the Mayche University as much as possible. It was not a pleasant feeling and I still feel unsettled about this. Future use of this information in articles or conference papers will therefore omit references to the setting. I plan to present my findings using stories because I think they may be able to help me to minimise the harm this information represents for my colleagues. I hope that presenting my findings as embedded in stories about education can help me to present the

importance of an emotionally secure environment for students to allow them to feel willing to participate and tackle learning challenges.

During the data collection process I experienced mixed emotions. When reading some learners' extracts about teachers' actions I felt shocked, ashamed and angry. I could empathise with participants' feelings about being afraid to speak in front of their classmates because of the mockery they were facing in their classes. At the same time, I could understand the frustration of the teacher who was trying to make them participate in class but could not reach the students because there was no recognition of students' feelings of shame due to being misunderstood and consequently mocked by their peers. I think this is a clear example of *emotional misunderstanding* (Hargreaves, 1998). According to Hargreaves, '...teachers frequently misconstrue their students' exuberance for hostility, bored compliance for studious commitment, embarrassment for stubbornness and silent respect for sullen resistance' (p. 321). I felt angry because I could not do anything. I was confined to my researcher's corner without being able to talk about these issues with the teacher involved or my participants because it would have threatened participants' confidentiality.

Emotional understanding (Denzin, 1984) requires time so that teachers and students can come to know and understand each other better. According to Hargreaves (1998):

Emotional understanding helps us recognize that what we see is fear, pride, embarrassment or disgust; it helps us to understand that the emotions in question are either justified or misplaced in this context, and it helps us to respond accordingly (p. 320).

Teacher 1 in this research is a young and energetic woman who used to be a student at the same institution. Thus, it may be that she needs to show students that in spite of being young she is as capable as other teachers who have been in the institution longer. Her need to prevent me from knowing her teaching style may even have led her to represent herself as a very strict teacher. It is notable that peer observations have been fiercely objected to in my workplace. Although the focus of peer observations may be positive, the cruel reality is that in the department there are some people who have used previous work done by some colleagues to diminish these colleagues' work.

Teaching commitments and the continuous and never-ending demands placed on teachers at the Mayche University are an obvious obstacle to really getting to know students well so as to reach an emotional understanding (Denzin, 1984). Changes need to be made in the way that teachers and students relate to each other, but this is just one aspect of the problem. The positive emotions that are likely to transform students' and teachers' interactions are mostly neutralised by the negative emotions engendered by political and administrative regulations imposed on teachers (Hargreaves, 1998). This is true in the Mexican context because, since the implementation of the Programme for the Development of Teachers in Mexican Higher Institutions (PROMEP), which is focused on giving teachers the opportunity to study Masters or PhD degrees so they can contribute to improving education levels in Mexico, a strong pressure has been placed on teachers to become researchers, because the criteria for evaluation are clearly based on numbers of articles published, presentations made at conferences and theses supervised. I believe this is having a very negative impact on classes because teachers are so pressured to meet the criteria suggested in the PROMEP regulations that no space for reflection or the development of a close

relationship with students is available. The pressure that has been imposed on teachers since PROMEP was established has made teachers very stressed, and I consider that this has not had any positive results in students' daily classes. Some teachers may be concerned that if they speak to anyone about how they feel, they may be seen as someone who is not capable, or they may feel guilty for not handling things professionally. In order to be promoted and to advance, teachers in Mexico need to carry out research and obtain higher degrees. It seems as if students are important, but that teachers need to focus first on research and advanced degrees so they can be effective. At the end of the day, teachers are evaluated according to the research they have carried out, the presentation they have made at conferences and how many theses they have supervised, but who acknowledges the time teachers have spent with their students? Nobody pays attention to this part of the job. It is as if this part of teaching is not recognised or valued by people in higher education administration.

I have been thinking a lot about how to positively channel the information I have gained from conducting this research. As I have previously mentioned, I believe that carrying out educational research should have benefits for all the parties involved. I think the participants in my study have gained by being able to recognise their emotions, reflect on them, and self-direct their learning process to those areas they consider can help them to improve. Thinking about the transformational process students went through, I consider that journals were a valuable resource for participants' learning development. Although journals were not considered as an intervention during the research design, I consider that journals became a positive intervention for awareness and understanding of emotions. The journals made students aware of the diverse emotions they were experiencing in their language learning process

and how these emotions were influenced by a wide range of factors. I also believe that journals were a strong determinant of the transformation of negative experiences into positive motivational energy. The journals allowed participants to reflect on the diverse emotional experiences they were facing and to understand the context in which emotions were aroused. I believe that the journals gave participants a space to think about their relationships with the different people with whom they interacted and how these influenced the way they saw their world. The journals also allowed participants to reflect on their values, goals and desires for the future. I believe this made them strong and self-directed in order to achieve their goals. Journals also allowed participants to put their experiences into words, enabling them to recreate the experiences and put things in perspective. When we experience negative events our feelings tend to be strong, but it is usually the case that after some time, we began to see things in a different light. All participants referred to journaling as a resource not only to understand their emotions but also to monitor their progress and direct their actions to the development of learning strategies that proved beneficial for their learning process. I believe that journals were not just beneficial for participants' learning development but also for their personal development since participants reported changes in their ability to see mistakes or to understand how experiences would help them to face future negative events. As Lambie (2009) observes, '...emotions provide us with self-knowledge only if we reflectively attend to them and categorize them as emotions' (p. 277). Thus, it seems that journals allowed participants in my study to see themselves from different angles. This multifaceted view provided them with a space for reflection on their actions and motivations. Thus, participants seem to have found better approaches with which to face emotional events in the future.

A way to disseminate the knowledge acquired through this research project would be to involve my colleagues in a research group. I consider that my autoethnography process was a developmental tool for me. I was able to acknowledge my feelings and go back to those experiences that made feel one way or another. I am therefore going to invite a group of teachers (including the teachers involved in this study) to be part of a research project on teachers' emotions. I believe that this new research project will help us to acknowledge not only our feelings as teachers, but also the feelings our students may be experiencing in our classes. Analysing the emotions we face in some classroom situations and how these made us feel may help us to understand why students are responding in certain ways and how students' reactions made us, as teachers, react. I believe that this intervention will help me to minimise the harm done to teachers by sharing my concerns about the need to better support our students. A starting point would be to support teachers first so that changes can be made in classrooms.

Reading my participants' emotional accounts made me experience positive and negative emotions. The positive effects of journals on participants' empowerment and development made me feel satisfied and happy. Journals allowed students to reflect on the emotional situations they experienced. Through the recognition of emotions and reflection on the events that aroused them, participants were able to know themselves better. Only when attention is given to emotions and reflection is exercised, is self-knowledge achieved (Lambie, 2009). This is an outcome of the research process that I consider beneficial for participants' personal and academic lives. However, their journals also made me feel sad and apprehensive because of the type of environment that they have to endure when in class. Those feelings made me go back to my first experiences as a teacher, when I was evaluated almost



every day. However, I think that journals were a tool that helped students' development. Emotional experiences changed their meaning to participants over time. When participants narrated their emotional experiences they were representing themselves in their world, not only in terms of the way that they are but also reflecting those selves that they would like to be. These revelations provided during the reflective act of writing in their journals helped students to see experiences as natural processes of not only personal but also academic growth. This can be seen by the references some students made in the last weeks of the term to making mistakes in oral presentations in front of the class as weaknesses they would have to transform into strengths in the future.

Journals also aroused negative emotions in me for other reasons. I felt desperate and angry when students expressed their moral obligations to family members. I could relate to that feeling of oppression that puts a lot of weight on a person's shoulders. Is this the price we have to pay for being born in a collectivist society? Although I admit that I love my cultural heritage, I also confess that now I see this more as a manipulation device towards us. However, this is something we inherited from our ancestors, so whom can we blame?

Negative emotions were also experienced when reading participants' accounts of some classroom situations, like when peers mocked less proficient students. I never experienced such incidents, but I felt disappointed that teachers were not paying attention to those events in order to stop that kind of behaviour. I also hated not being called by my name when I was a student; it made me feel like I was not part of the group or as if teachers did not even

know that I was there. In addition, I felt that teachers sometimes need to be flexible when students verbalise that they dislike some activities. We can ask them to practice the same topic in the way that they prefer as long as they are able to present us with suitable activities they have created. Personally, I am not a teacher who compliments students verbally in the classroom. I prefer to write a note or a comment in order to show to them that I am paying attention to their language learning development or efforts. I now see that this aspect is very important, not only to build learners' confidence but also to their willingness to participate in class.

Thinking about my reading of participants' emotional experiences, I now find that I may have unconsciously given priority to those aspects that closely related to my own language learning history in my data analysis. Participants in my study represented two different classroom environments in their emotional descriptions. I may have unintentionally directed my attention to those areas of classroom management that I consider not to be humanistic or beneficial for language learners' motivation. It may be that a qualitative researcher's lens is blurred by his or her own socio-historic and cultural influences (Pavlenko, 2007). Although taking place at two different historical times, my experience and that of my participants are very much alike because they occurred in the same cultural context.

Without doubt, doing this research was a very educational process in terms of how to go about doing qualitative research, but I still have so much to learn and experience. I look forward to continuing to enrich my life and profession through designing qualitative projects. This study has opened up new research avenues to walk down, it has stretched my understanding of ethical issues and their paramount role while conducting any piece of research, but,

most of all, it has made me realise the key role our emotions play in all areas of our lives.

The following section of this chapter will introduce and discuss the implications of the research for foreign language teachers' practice.

## **7.2 Implications for foreign language teachers**

The importance of this research was in displaying foreign language learners' emotional experiences during instruction and showing how these experiences impacted on their motivation. Results of my study indicate that there is a definite need for foreign language teachers to review their teaching practices in order to address students' emotional experiences in classrooms. This may provide a challenge to practising teachers, who may think that is not their job to cater to learners' affective needs, as reflected in the criticisms humanistic methods faced during their introductory years (see Gadd, 1998). However, emotions have been revealed as strongly impacting on foreign language learners' motivation not only in classroom instruction (Guilloteaux and Dörnyei, 2008; Garret and Young, 2009; Imai, 2010), but also in individualised settings (Bown and White, 2010). Language learning is a process replete with negative and positive emotions, thus appropriate management of students' emotions is necessary for language teachers to enable them to help their students make their emotions work for them and not against them.

This section puts forward recommendations for foreign language teachers so they can promote the experience of emotions that can activate motivational behaviour in students. All the recommendations that follow are based on the analysis presented in the previous chapter and the conclusions presented in Section 7.1. These recommendations are made in light of the review of current

theory and research on education and foreign language learning. They are classified into the following three main topics:

1. Developing a motivating language learning environment;
2. Teachers' affective-motivational power in ELT; and
3. Motivating English language teaching practices.

The following section will present a brief discussion of the aspects relevant to each of the above areas.

#### **7.2.1 Developing a motivating language learning environment**

The positive effects of a non-threatening environment in language classrooms have been widely highlighted in the literature on foreign language learning (Moskowitz, 1978; Arnold, 1999; Dörnyei, 2001a, 2007) and general education (Patterson, 1973; Gage and Beliner, 1992). Language learning is a complex task that is full of very apprehensive moments, especially for adult learners who may have already experienced success in diverse academic situations. However, these past experiences cannot always be replicated in language learning as easily as in the past. This can cause students to feel embarrassed and ashamed of not being able to have the same level of success at least during the first months of learning a foreign language. Thus, it is important to establish a safe and secure environment in which beginner students feel willing to make mistakes. The creation of a positive learning environment should therefore be the first aim language teachers strive for. But how can we create such an environment? Three key aspects for the development of a non-threatening learning environment are:

- creating a positive classroom climate, through promoting group cohesion; and establishing good teacher-student relationships.

### Creating a positive classroom climate

The importance of creating a positive classroom climate in which students feel secure and willing to take the risks inherent in learning a foreign language is a paramount skill teachers need to work on. Teachers need to develop strategies to make the learning environment a supportive one in which students feel confident and willing to participate. Establishing respectful and positive human relations is not an easy task, not only in the academic field, but in any aspect of human life. Thus, it is important for teachers to enforce effective techniques that can contribute to the establishment and maintenance of positive interpersonal relations in any instructional situation.

### Promoting group-cohesion

According to Dörnyei (2007), a crucial factor in developing a motivating classroom environment is '...the quality of relationships between the class members' (p. 720). Dörnyei (2007) suggests that the first aspect conducive to a positive classroom environment is the cohesion that can be developed by the members of the group where learning is taking place. According to Dörnyei, cohesion is composed of two different phases: attraction and acceptance. Attraction is developed during first encounters where physical features, perceived competence and similarities in personality and attitudes can make students and teachers form a positive initial bond. Thus, the first impressions students get during initial course sessions are important. Teachers should regard the first session of a course as a sales challenge because they are presenting their product (teaching) to clients (learners).

Teachers should not only be prepared to give students a concise and clear teaching plan that they are going to work with over the course, but also be prepared to give students some personal details to show who they are as people. First sessions should be used to start building a trustful and personalised relationship with students in order to make them feel related to teachers. There are diverse humanistic-affective activities that can be used for this non-academic purpose (see Moskowitz, 1978). Although Dörnyei (2007) considers that first impressions are not so important in the long run, I believe that they can be a first step to achieving a positive relationship with students.

Learning activities should be designed to encourage cooperation instead of competition among students (Dörnyei, 2001a). The advanced students mentioned in my study should have been grouped together and had one session per week devoted to them, in which the level of activities were more appropriate for them. Only one advanced student agreed to take part in the study and he expressed his feelings of frustration and boredom when having to interact with lower-level students because he always ended up helping them without being able to learn anything new himself. By separating these two proficiency groups the fear lower-level students were experiencing could have been diminished and they may have felt more willing to take risks and make mistakes in class activities. By grouping students in this way, students may have felt more comfortable, knowing they were all at the same language level.

The sense of frustration some students revealed in their journals when their peers made fun of them should be avoided. As students expressed, teachers have the obligation to stop this kind of behaviour as soon as it arises in language classrooms. Students' mockery impacted negatively on other

students' confidence and self-perception of competence, making them hesitant about their knowledge when doing a piece of homework and leading them to perceive communicating in English was a very difficult task they were not able to achieve. It is important, then, for teachers to make students aware that errors are a natural step in the complex task of learning a new language so students can see errors as their friends, not as their enemies. By teachers making students aware of the positive outcome of errors, in terms of identifying the areas they need to work on, learners can feel less apprehensive about making mistakes.

### Establishing good teacher-student relationships

During his years as a therapist, Rogers (1962) realised that talking to clients was not as efficient in helping them as listening to them, thereby allowing them to come up with a solution for their problems. In educational settings the rapport a teacher establishes with students is one of the most important aspects in developing a motivating classroom environment. As Rogers (1962) states, 'it is the quality of the interpersonal encounter with the client which is the most significant element in determining effectiveness' (p. 416). Students in the study emphasised that although the teacher was prepared and efficient, her interpersonal skills did not help to promote a healthy teacher-student relationship. The teacher was perceived by students as not really interested in them as human beings and this was a major factor that contributed to the development of a very negative learning environment. It is thus important to concentrate on building a trustful and empathic relationship with students in order to make them feel valued.

Current learner-centred education theory conceives of the teacher as a facilitator and not as an authoritarian figure in classrooms. Many teachers may

not be aware that the relationships developed in language classrooms impact students not only for a term or course, but for longer. There are study reports that highlight the high value learners give to teachers who care, listen to them, understand their needs, respect them as individuals, and are open, honest and sensitive to their personal problems (Hascher, 2007; Lei, 2007; Bown and White, 2010). Students spend many hours of their lives in classrooms and positive human relationships in classrooms help them to develop positive self-concepts. In language classrooms, teachers are not only teaching English; we are also forming human beings who will be interacting with many people and impacting on them, thus the need to help students develop in an integral way is paramount.

I believe that this is a very sensitive topic because it cannot be faked: students in the study stated that Teacher 1 was acting when trying to be caring and humorous in class. This made them not trust the teacher, while they referred to other teachers with whom they felt so affiliated that they considered them as equals in class without meaning that the students could be disrespectful or misbehave. On the contrary, the students felt that because of that trust, they had to respond to the teacher by being well-prepared in class.

### **7.2.2 The teacher's affective-motivational power in ELT**

In terms of pedagogic implications, the findings suggest that the teacher's attitude, feedback approach and non-verbal communication have a pervasive influence on students' motivational behaviour in class. I believe that we teachers worry about being well-prepared when facing a new group of students, and work hard to design a syllabus according to the students' levels, preparing exciting material so students can master the course content.



Although those aspects of language teaching are important, it is also necessary to review our attitudes during classroom instruction.

A positive teacher attitude and appropriate interpersonal skills are important, as reported by participants in this study. Reflection on previous teaching experiences can be helpful in identifying areas that we as teachers need to work on. By showing commitment towards helping students learn, teachers can make a difference in students' everyday motivation. Students revealed the importance of being supported in those individual areas that needed reinforcement. By providing students with extra practice in those particular areas, the teacher can give the students the impression of being cared about.

Another aspect to consider is the type of relationship teachers develop with students. I believe that this is a very sensitive area for teachers because many may consider that this is not an aspect inherent to the ELT field. Some teachers may feel that their task is just to teach without having the obligation to develop a relationship with students. As reported in the study, Teacher 1 tried to develop a relationship with the students but it seems that this was only done while in the classroom since, as students revealed, outside the classroom her attitude was different and this made students perceive her in-class attitude as an act. Students believed that the teacher was not really interested in them as people, which was very detrimental to their motivation. Teachers cannot trick students as they can easily discern whether we are being genuine or not. Three main aspects that need to be considered in reference to the affective-motivational power of teachers are:

- teachers' attitude;
- teachers' non-verbal communication; and
- teachers' feedback approach.

### Teachers' attitude

By showing genuine interest in students' learning processes, teachers will inspire trust, confidence and a motivating learning environment. Collaborative learning is not only about students but also about teachers' involvement in the process through the creation of a caring and supportive attitude that results in students to reacting positively to learning.

The first aspect to consider when facing a new group of students is making an individual evaluation so the teacher knows the students' level of language, the objectives students want to get from the course, and their personal interests, worries and desires in life. Although it may sound time-consuming this could be done in the first class through a short survey in which students can describe themselves as language learners. This will allow the teacher to get to know students better and to realise the different personalities she will be interacting with over the period of the course.

It is important to be attentive to students' feelings and to really listen to what they say when expressing their needs, beliefs and ideas. Mostly students just want to be heard and supported. Students in their first year at university are going through a process of adjustment to very different situations not only academically but also personally. Thus, the very first strategy to follow is to get to know students well in order to be able to use that personal information in future in case students need individual guidance and support. Having this information at hand can help teachers approach their students and discuss the problems the students may face.

### Teachers' non-verbal communication

Students in the study reported the contradiction between teachers' words and their gestures. The teacher's gestures, tone of voice and body language constrained students from participating since they felt the teacher was being judgmental and not supportive to their learning needs by providing them with public social comparison.

Whether teachers are aware of it or not, gestures convey meaning, and, as highlighted by students in this study, some gestures were sending a very negative message. I believe the communication suggested by gestures in this particular group was stronger than the verbal communication in making students inhibited and constrained. The teacher may have been exasperated by the lack of participation students showed in class, which made her display her frustration through body language. As stated by Gläser-Zikuda and FuB (2008), '...student emotions are generally influenced by all perceived teacher competencies' (p. 145). Teacher competencies are not only academic but affective as well. Rogers (1962) acknowledges that communication is one of the most important skills for educators. Students in the study recognised the teacher as a very good teacher, but it seems that her interpersonal skills were not appropriate. This was the aspect that made students feel not only afraid but also uninterested in her class. As stated by Hamacheck (1998), '... in our interactions we not only communicate what we know, we telegraph who we are' (p. 193). Teachers way of being play a crucial role in the development of an environment conducive to learning. Thus, it is important for teachers to develop appropriate communication and interpersonal skills so students do not feel constrained or inhibited by our body language.

### Teachers' feedback approach

One of the most often reported sources of students' negative emotions in the study was the teacher's feedback approach, which made them feel judged and criticised. Students felt evaluated not on their individual progress but in comparison to the advanced level of others students in the class. Dörnyei (2007) acknowledges that '... evaluation by authority figures [has] a particularly strong impact on the students' self-appraisal' (p. 729).

The feedback approach provided to students should be informational, highlighting students' progress and making comments about their competence. The results of this study indicate that performing in front of peers or participating in class were the most often reported causes of fear. Students reported feeling very threatened by being evaluated in public; therefore teachers should avoid correcting students' mistakes publicly but instead praise them for their efforts. Individual areas that need to be corrected should be communicated in notes at the end of class or through personalised individual feedback sessions so students can be aware of their mistakes and work to correct them.

Teachers should be sensitive about students' feelings when providing feedback. Too much correction can lead students to avoid participating because of their feelings of being negatively evaluated when trying to participate. More group work should be promoted in beginner courses so students feel less pressure to perform correctly and to allow them to start gaining confidence by being supported by peers. Designing different tasks according to the levels of the students can help to reduce feelings of failure that constant negative correction can cause in students. For instance, teachers can make brief notes of students' individual improvement or stronger

areas on a weekly basis, and give students this qualitative evaluation at the end of each month in order to give personalised praise and recognition to students' efforts. Acknowledging students' strengths and weaknesses can help students to be aware of which areas they need to work on and to place special interest in the types of activities that are going to help learners develop these areas. This can also help to reduce the value of grades by not giving students a mark but instead a general comment on their progress.

### **7.2.3 Motivating English language teaching practices**

In the context of the Mexican education system, grades are very valuable to students and parents. This fact contributes to learners' comparisons with their peers and engenders a very competitive environment in educational settings from very early years. This is very detrimental to intrinsic motivation because no enjoyment can be experienced when learners are only worried about getting the best grades in order to be considered valuable. It is sad because is not knowledge but grades that motivate most students in the Mexican context. I believe that this is a very difficult challenge faced not only by Mexican teachers but by teachers in many parts of the world. Thus, teachers need to help students see their learning process positively. It is necessary to instil in students positive attitudes towards learning as an enjoyable and rewarding experience not only because of grades but because of the empowerment students can get from knowledge.

Speaking from my personal experience, I grew up believing that my grades were the measure by which my intelligence was judged. Thus, the only goal I had for many years was to obtain the highest grade without being aware of the value of knowledge for its own sake. My need to develop as a teacher and as

a human being was the spark for my autonomous learning behaviour. Thus, teaching practices in foreign language contexts should always include a learners' development component so students can be empowered. I believe that by paying special attention to the development of learners' positive self-concepts, teachers will have more motivated students in foreign language classrooms. Three key aspects for teachers to pay attention are:

- promoting learner development;
- supporting students' individual needs; and
- encouraging responsibility and commitment to learning

#### Promoting learner development

Current educational policies are centred on learners and this has to be reflected in educational practices by providing students with a systematic and supportive path to help them develop in an integral way. It is therefore important to intersperse in ELT courses some activities to promote learners' development so students are able to become more self-directed in their language learning process. As suggested by Lamb (2009), '...explicit attention needs to be paid to encouraging learners to understand that they have a role to play in their own learning, that they have control over their learning outcomes' (p. 86).

Teachers can provide students with guidance on which types of learning strategies can help them to overcome their weaker learning areas, since strategies are 'An important part of a motivational teaching practice that has a considerable empowering effect ...' (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 729). Specific goals for students can be set so they can monitor their own efforts. I consider that this

can also help students to be realistic and focused. Students need to be conscious of the great impact they can have on their language learning process as long as they are willing to work hard for it. This is not only a lesson for language learning but for life in general. Students should be encouraged to focus on their personal achievements and on setting short-term goals so they can experience success.

An aspect of classroom management that should be avoided when setting up pair or group work is leaving students to their own devices without checking how students are doing or what types of challenges they are facing. Students at beginner levels particularly need to be closely monitored so they can get the basics of the language right in order to continue solving problems and going further in their learning process by themselves.

#### Supporting students' individual needs

Students react differently to the emotions engendered by instruction; thus it is important to support students' individual needs by providing them with a variety of learning activities. Individual analysis of learning objectives should be encouraged so students feel that they are working on their needs. Setting up projects in which students can be creative and pursue personal interests can help boost their motivation. As suggested by Lamb (2009), 'Teachers need to support their learners in making appropriate choices by helping them to prioritise their needs and to understand the nature and purposes of different learning tasks' (p. 86).

Reflection should also be encouraged so learners can understand their emotions better as learners, and this can make students set individualised goals to work for. A peer-support scheme could be set up so students have a

space to talk about their learning worries, and affiliative feelings can be promoted. By promoting self-awareness teachers can help students to be more realistic about their learning goals.

Self-evaluation should be encouraged on a weekly or monthly basis so students can review the strategies they are using, the success – or lack of success - they are having with them, and can set new objectives to work towards. This can help students to experience success and build their self-confidence. Evaluation is a very delicate area in Mexican educational settings as it is considered the public representation of a person's intelligence and self-worth. Students are not used to self-evaluation as, from very early years, they are assigned a number to reflect their knowledge level. I consider that teachers need to start changing students' attitudes towards evaluation by encouraging learners to be more self-critical about their learning process.

### **7.3 Summary**

This chapter has presented a discussion of the conclusions and implications for foreign language teachers drawn from the study findings. Some recommendations to help students boost their motivation and reduce the experience of emotions that can be detrimental to their success in foreign language learning have also been outlined.



# **Chapter 8**

## **Conclusion**

Having a partial, local, historical knowledge is still knowing. (Richardson, 1994, p. 518)

### **8.0 Introduction**

This chapter summarises the major findings and conclusions drawn out from the research into foreign language learners' emotional experiences and their effects on students' motivation. Also, the contributions to knowledge that the research study make are highlighted. The chapter then introduces a reflection on the limitations of the study and considers suggestions for future research. Finally, a reflection on my own personal view is presented.

### **8.1 Summary of the research**

The context for this study was Mexican language learners studying the ELT programme in a Southeast state university. The study centred on 18 participants, 14 females and four males, starting their second year. The goal was to examine in depth what impact the emotional reactions experienced during classroom instruction had on the students' motivation. Emotional experiences were identified as having a significant role in Mexican students' motivational behaviour during classroom instruction.

The main value of this research was in presenting the effects that learners' emotional experiences had on their motivation. A qualitative research approach was used to compile and explore the motivational effects of emotional experiences from the perspective of the participants.

Educational scholars have affirmed that emotions have a significant role on motivation to learn (Dewaele, 2005; Garret and Young, 2009; Bown and White, 2010; Imai, 2010). In fact, participants in this study reported that attention to affect was the difference in the motivational behaviour they displayed in two different classrooms. This demonstrates the close relationship between emotions and motivation. Negative and positive emotions impact on learners' motivation not only negatively but positively as well.

Motivation was negatively influenced by teachers' attitude, non-verbal communication and feedback approach. A caring attitude was revealed to have positive effects on learners' motivation since they reported feeling valued as human beings and that they needed to repay this by being actively involved in class. Making use of a humanistic approach in language classes proved to be an enhancer and developer of intrinsic motivation as participants revealed having cultivated a desire to learn more.

Motivational was revealed as dynamic and evolving. Diverse emotional influences impacted on the motivational behaviour of this study's participants. The research findings support Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998) process model of L2 motivation in that motivation is a process with different stages.

The significant influence of the Mexican context on students' motivation contributed to the positive results of negative emotions in this study. Although

students experienced more negative situations than positive ones, they turned these into positive outcomes. The positive learning outcomes derived from the constant experience of negative emotions may have been completely different in another context. Thus, language teachers need to carefully address emotions in their specific contexts in order to enable learners to manage them to their advantage.

Participants' visions of themselves were an important motivating factor for students' motivation maintenance. These results support Dörnyei's (2005) L2 motivational self system. Students were not only motivated for their future familial obligations or internalised desire to become 'someone' (ought to self), but also for their visions of themselves speaking English fluently (ideal self).

The study's findings also revealed that motivation in language learning cannot be developed in a vacuum; certain conditions need to be present before motivation can be initiated. This supports Dörnyei's (2001) motivational strategies proposal.

## **8.2 Contributions to knowledge**

This study is unique in that it is the first which investigates the role of emotions in Mexican tertiary level language learners' motivation. The findings of the research study make four important contributions to knowledge in the fields of affect and motivation in language learning, as follows:

### **8.2.1. The dynamic nature of language learning motivation:**

The research findings support Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998) process model of L2 motivation in that the motivational behaviour of participants was not stable but demonstrably dynamic during the 12-week period of the study. As described in participants' journals, their motivation underwent changes resulting from different motivational influences, such as the learning environment and parents' encouragement.

### **8.2.2 Negative emotions can be ameliorated by the language learning context:**

The research findings provide strong evidence that, contrary to previous research findings on anxiety in language learning (Horwitz, 2001), negative emotions are not always detrimental to language learning motivation. Although negative emotions had the immediate negative effect of lowering participants' motivational energy, they transformed these into positive energy after reflecting on the moral obligations they had to their families. As mentioned before, the Mexican context was revealed as a positive enhancer of participants' motivation. Thus, it is confirmed that the cultural context in which learners operate can play a major role on ameliorating the effects of negative emotions on language learning motivation.

### **8.2.3 Instrumental orientation can be a powerful motivator in an EFL context:**

Although instrumental orientation has been considered not an effective determinant of motivation in foreign language learning (Gardner, 1985), participants in my study revealed that instrumental motivation can be a powerful motivator in EFL contexts where the integration to an English-speaking community is not an aim. Participants expressed that completing

their degree will allow them to get a well-paid job which could give them a quality of life they have not been able to experience. Thus, the future benefits attained to getting a university degree on ELT was a powerful motivator for these students.

#### **8.2.4 'The L2 Ideal Self' is an important motivating factor:**

The study results support Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational self system in that the constant emotional appraisals learners made of themselves in relation to the learning experiences they faced and imagined future outcomes or desired results helped them to re energise their motivational behaviour during the 12-week period of the study. The participants expressed clear visions of their future selves in that they wanted to become 'someone', to have a degree and a successful future. It seems, then, that learners' reflections about their future selves can, indeed, help them to sustain their motivation to learn a language.

#### **8.2.5: 'The L2 Ought-to Self' and the 'L2 Learning Experience' are also important motivating factors:**

Although Dörnyei (2009) favours the 'Ideal Self' as the principal motivator in language learning, the two other dimensions of his L2 self system were also present in the participants' emotional experiences: they narrated how they needed to succeed in their studies in order to fulfil a moral obligation to family members in the future (ought to self), and described powerfully how some aspects of the classroom environment made them stronger (L2 learning experience).

Research on emotions in foreign language learning is still scarce (Imai, 2010). Although my research has referred specifically to the Mexican tertiary

language learning context, I believe that it can assist in illuminating more generally the complex roles emotions play in language learners' motivation. Not only has this research uncovered a range of context governed factors affecting language learning motivation, it may, more specifically, assist in the understanding of emotions experienced by language learners during classroom instruction and inform the design of interventions and activities to help language learners manage these. In addition, these research findings can contribute to help language teachers improve their practice in enhancing learners' motivation.

### **8.3 Limitations of this research**

This research is an empirical study undertaken on the relationship between emotions and motivation in foreign language learning. However, the study is limited to a section of the learners of the ELT major in a Southeast Mexican university, so it relates only to this particular setting. The study focused only on 18 foreign language learners and most (17) of them were beginners, which may have influenced the constant experience of negative emotions during the study period and the results found. However, I consider that focusing on lower-level students' experiences enabled me to provide answers to my research questions. I would argue that although the sample is small, it is representative of the larger population of learners at the Mayche University. The results revealed by these participants' emotional experiences made me think about what results could have been drawn from a group of proficient students, which would be a part needed to complete this picture.

Another possible limitation arises from the fact that a qualitative approach using personal narratives and interviews is not commonly used in Mexico. This

causes certain problems in trying to ensure that participants feel free to speak frankly, especially when referring to teachers, since teachers in Mexican rural settings are seen as authority figures. The research population was formed of rural and urban participants, and it has to be recognised that Mexican culture may have restricted a full telling of the truth, and a willingness to make critical observations. However, I sought every possible means, including particular emphasis on anonymity and confidentiality in the research process, to overcome this limitation.

Another possible limitation is the fact that class observations were not included in the study design. However, as mentioned in the methodology chapter, my purpose was to capture students' experiences and my presence in class might have influenced not only the learners but also the teachers' behaviour in class. Thus, the data gathered through observation could have been restricted since both teachers and students may have displayed behaviour according to the context's cultural norms, which may have been detrimental to the purpose of this investigation. Another limitation could be the fact that teachers portrayed in learners' emotional experiences were not interviewed and this could have added more information to enrich the interpretation of participants' accounts.

The main focus of the study was a deep analysis of students' emotional experiences collected through an emotional journal over a period of twelve weeks, followed by interviews at the end of their second English course. The design strategy followed was dictated by the fact that I was a single researcher with a limited period to conduct the fieldwork due to time restrictions on the completion of my studies. Thus, this has influenced my

research design in many ways and constitutes another limitation to my research.

In spite of the limitations mentioned above, this research provides in-depth information about the emotional experiences faced by 18 Mexican students during their foreign language learning process. This study opens a window to better understanding the impact of emotions on language learners' motivation and provides information for further research and for the practice of English language teachers.

#### **8.4 Recommendations for future research**

Although affect has been recognised as an important aspect of foreign language learning, its close relation to motivation has recently increased the interest in this area. Negative emotions have been considered detrimental to foreign language learning, but the Mexican context revealed that outcomes are not always negative. Thus, future research needs to be carried out in diverse contexts in order to find out what outcomes are derived from negative emotions and how specific contexts modify its impact.

Future research also needs to make a comparison of the emotional experiences encountered by lower-level and proficient learners. Do students at different levels react differently to the same emotional experiences? Are the emotional experiences of proficient language learners different from those of lower-level learners? Do proficient language learners experience more positive than negative emotions? How is the motivation of proficient language learners affected by emotional experiences? These are some questions that were drawn from my research experience.



A topic that needs to be addressed in future research is the influence of non-verbal communication on students' motivational behaviour in language classes, as well as how learners' personalities and self-esteem levels influence their perceptions when receiving feedback. I consider that these are avenues to continue enriching our knowledge about affect and adjusting our teaching practice in order to enhance learners' motivation.

Future research on motivational factors that help students to overcome negative experiences should be done in different contexts in order to understand better how to help students maintain their levels of motivation in foreign language classes.

Future research should also concentrate on collecting information from different teaching practices in order to further our understanding of the type of instructional approaches that can positively influence the motivation of foreign language learners. Such understanding will be useful for the design of future language teacher training courses in order to promote instructional approaches that can enhance motivational behaviour in classrooms. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, enhancing foreign language learning should be a main concern in the foreign language teaching research agenda.

### **8.5 A personal reflection**

I started this personal and professional journey with the desire to learn how to do research, to give my daughters the opportunity to experience living in a different culture, and to reenergise my teaching practice. Although this degree was the next step on my professional path, it will also allow me to expand my

professional qualifications by being able to conduct research in an area that has always fascinated me: affect.

During this PhD journey I have come to realise that this fascination originates in my need to understand why I was not as expressive as my mother and sisters. In spite of being born in a collectivist society and nurtured by a very eloquent mother, I was always aware of being different. I think that it was difficult to accept my personality because I was not like most of the members of my family. After my daughters were born I realised that it is not something I lack but something that needed to be developed. It is not difficult or embarrassing to show my daughters how much I love them and that they represent the engine that keeps me alive. However, showing my feelings to others is very different. But I am like this; it is OK to be different and I am happy like this. According to the theory of multiple intelligences I am an intrapersonal type (Gardner, 2005), so I do not question myself anymore; I finally accept how I am and enjoy it.

My Mexican educational background did not help me to develop as a whole person since classes were focused on the class as a group, so there was no space for treating learners as individuals. Thus, my views or opinions were never encouraged or asked for. I experienced the same at home, where males were considered the ones worthy to have university degrees while women were supposed to be housewives. I believe that this was very detrimental for my self-concept and also for my personal development. I grew up believing that my intelligence was reflected in my school marks so I mastered how to memorise for tests. Facing a different approach in my language learning classes was very difficult and painful, but that first year at university was such a critical period that my whole person development started. Although the

process has not been easy, my enthusiasm and love of learning keeps me motivated to continue my personal and professional development.

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, I started my research experience looking at the area of learning strategies, affective learning strategies being the ones I wanted to focus my study on. My research training modules made me appreciate and understand the importance of carrying out a piece of education research and allowed me to understand the relevance of what we do in research and how we do it. I knew nothing about research methods in general, let alone qualitative research, before I started my research for a PhD in education. It took me a long time to digest the meaning of an interpretative stance in qualitative research. Indeed, this journey has been replete with *emotional reactions*; however it has been educational not only in the professional arena but also in the personal one.

Professionally, I have acquired new skills that will allow me to enrich my daily teaching practices and future research. I am aware of the powerful effect our attitudes and communication skills have on our students' learning processes. Personally, it is very surprising for me because I have always been worried about my communication skills, but in the personal arena. Looking back, I think that they are better developed in the professional arena. However, I believe that personal and professional developments go hand in hand, so this realisation will give me the opportunity to grow in both areas, which is very exciting.

This study has allowed me to go back to my first year as an English language learner, and reflection upon this has made me understand the difficulties students in their first year at the Mayche University may be going through.

Although I have lived in other countries before, this experience in the UK made me experience again the feelings of fear, frustration and confusion of adapting to a different culture. Beginner students at the Mayche University may go through a similar process, since for some of them the process of learning a foreign language is like going into a different world. Acculturation to a new setting and a different educational approach is replete with emotional experiences that need to be managed in order to achieve good results. The research process has been an empowering experience that has extended my interest in affect. The search for answers to my research questions has led me on an academic journey which has been a valuable and rewarding learning experience. I hope to be better prepared not only to support my future students' needs at the Mayche University but also to develop a project that can allow me to extrapolate my knowledge into a different area that can be of benefit for the Mayche community. I believe that emotional awareness can be applied to different areas in order to help not only learners but the wider population in Mexico.

Some ideas have come to my mind about ways to help younger children to be better emotionally prepared to face not only education but life. When I first arrived to Nottingham and was looking for a school place for my daughters, I was shocked and puzzled by the primary school system. At that time, I disagreed with students being allocated to groups according to their age. In Mexico, children enter primary school at six, take tests and sometimes fail courses. As a result, there are children repeating the same school year, and some repeat the same level more than twice. Now, I consider this is cruel to children at that age. The impact of these failures on children's self-concepts may be very harmful and a pervasive influence on their whole person development. Early school years should be focused not only on developing

basic knowledge in Spanish, mathematics and natural science but also on helping children to develop in a caring and supportive environment so they can grow into happy and responsible human beings. Thus, I hope to have the opportunity to express this in the future and develop a project with my students to introduce some emotional support for young children in local primary schools through the social service requirement ELT major students have to complete before graduating.

## **8.6 Summary**

This chapter has summarised the major findings and conclusions drawn out from the research into foreign language learners' emotional experiences and their effects on students' motivation. This study has striven to better understand how emotions affected foreign language learners' motivation, based on 18 students of the ELT programme at the Mayche University. This chapter presented the limitations of the study and considered suggestions for future research. Finally, a brief reflection on my own personal experience of research gives this thesis a close.

## References

- ABBUHL, R. & MACKEY, A. (2008) Second language acquisition research methods. In HORNBERGER, N. H. (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of Language and Education*. 2nd ed. New York, Springer, pp.99-111.
- ABOUSERIE, R. (1994) Sources and levels of stress in relation to locus of control and self-esteem in university students. *Educational Psychology*, 14(3), pp. 323–330.
- AKI, O. (2006) Is emotional intelligence or mental intelligence more important in language learning? *Journal of Applied Sciences*, 6 (1), pp.66-70.
- AMBERT, A.-M., ADLER, P. A., ADLER, P. & DETZNER, D. F. (1995) Understanding and evaluating qualitative research. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 57 (4), pp.879-893.
- ANDERSON, L. (2006) Analytic autoethnography. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 35 (4), pp.373-395.
- APPEL, J. (1989) Humanistic approaches in the secondary school: how far can we go? *ELT Journal*, 43 (4), pp.261-267.
- ARNOLD, J. & BROWN, D. H. (1999) A map of the terrain. In ARNOLD, J. (Ed.) *Affect in language learning*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp.1-24.
- ARNOLD, J. (1998) Towards more humanistic language teaching. *ELT Journal*, 53 (3), pp.235-242.
- ARNOLD, J. (2007) Self-concept as part of the affective domain in language learning. In RUBIO, F. (Ed.) *Self-esteem and foreign language learning*. Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp.13-29.
- ARNOLD, J. (Ed.) (1999) *Affect in language learning*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- ATKINSON, D. (1989) 'Humanistic' approaches in the adult classroom: an affective reaction. *ELT Journal*, 43 (4), pp.268-273.
- ATKINSON, P. (1997) Narrative turn or blind alley? *Qualitative Health Research*, 7 (3), pp.325-344.
- BAILEY, K. M. & NUNAN, D. (1996) *Voices from the language classroom*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

- BAILEY, K. M. & OCHSNER, R. (1983) A methodological review of the diary studies: windmill tilting or social science. In BAILEY, K. M., LONG, M. H. & PECK, S. (Eds.) *Second language acquisition studies: series on issues in second language research*. Rowley, MA, Newbury House, pp.188-198.
- BAILEY, K. M. (1980) An introspective analysis of an individual language learning experience. In SCARCELLA, R. C. & KRASHEN, S. D. (Eds.) *Research in second language acquisition: selected papers of the Los Angeles second language acquisition research forum*. Rowley, Mass, Newbury House, pp.67-102.
- BAILEY, K. M. (1983) Competitiveness and anxiety in adult second language learning. In SELIGER, H. W. & LONG, M. H. (Eds.) *Classroom oriented research in second language acquisition*. New York, Newbury House, pp.67-102.
- BANDURA, A. (1977) Self-efficacy: toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, 84 (2), pp.191-215.
- BANDURA, A. (1994) Self-efficacy. In RAMACHAUDRAN, V. S. (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of human behavior*. New York, Academic Press, pp.71-81.
- BANDURA, A. (1997) *Self-efficacy: the exercise of control*. New York, W. H. Freeman and Company.
- BAO, X.-H. & LAM, S.-F. (2008) Who makes the choice? Rethinking the role of autonomy and relatedness in Chinese children's motivation. *Child Development*, 79 (2), pp.269-283.
- BARBOUR, R. (2008) *Introducing qualitative research: a student guide to the craft of doing qualitative research*. London, Sage.
- BARRET, L. F., MESQUITA, B., OCHSNER, K. N. & GROSS, J. J. (2007) The experience of emotion. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 58, pp.373-403.
- BASCIA, N. & HARGREAVES, A. (2000) *The sharp edge of educational change: teaching, leading and the realities of reform*. New York: Routledge Farmer.
- BASSEY, M. (1999) *Case study research in educational settings*. Buckingham, Open University Press.
- BEARD, C., CLEGG, S. & SMITH, K. (2007) Acknowledging the affective in higher education. *British Educational Research Journal*, 33 (2), pp.235-252.

BENNET, R. (2003) Determinants of undergraduate student dropout rates in a university business studies department. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 27 (2), pp.123-141.

BENTON, T. (2006) A Tough-love manifesto for professors. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 52 (1), p. C1.

BHANOT, R. (1983) Review humanistic approaches: an empirical view. *ELT Journal*, 37 (4), pp.361-362.

BIDDULPH, M. (2005) The monochrome frame, mural making as a methodology for understanding self. In MITCHELL, C., WEBER, S. &

O'REILLY-SCANLON, K. (Eds.) *Just who do we think we are? Methodologies for autobiography and self-study in teaching*. London, Routledge-Falmer, pp.49-57.

BIRCH, M., MILLER, T., MAUTHNER, M. & JESSOP, J. (2002) Introduction. In BIRCH, M., MILLER, T., MAUTHNER, M. & JESSOP, J. (Eds.) *Ethics in qualitative research*. London, Sage, pp.1-13.

BLOOMBERG, L. D. & VOLPE, M. (2008) *Completing your qualitative dissertation: a road map from beginning to end*. London, Sage.

BLUMENFELD, P. C. (1992) Classroom learning and motivation: clarifying and expanding goal theory. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 84 (3), pp.272-281.

BOCHNER, A. P. & ELLIS, C. (1996) Talking over ethnography. In ELLIS, C. & BOCHNER, A. P. (Eds.) *Composing ethnography: alternative forms of qualitative writing*. Walnut Creek, CA, AltaMira Press, pp.13-45.

BOCHNER, A. P. & ELLIS, C. (2006) Communication as autoethnography. In SHEPHERD, G. J., JOHN, J. S. & STRIPHAS, T. (Eds.) *Communication as ....: perspectives on theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, pp.13-21.

BOGDAN, R. C. & BIKLEN, S. K. (1982) *Qualitative research for education: an introduction to theory and methods*. 2nd ed. London, Allyn and Bacon.

BOGDAN, R. C. & BIKLEN, S. K. (2007) *Qualitative research for education: an introduction to theory and methods*. 5th ed. London, Pearson.

BOUD, D., KEOGH, R. & WALKER, D. (1985a) Promoting reflection in learning: a model. In BOUD, D., KEOGH, R. & WALKER, D. (Eds.) *Reflection: turning experience into learning*. London, Kogan Page Ltd, pp.18-40.



BOUD, D., KEOGH, R. & WALKER, D. (1985b) What is reflection in learning? In BOUD, D., KEOGH, R. & WALKER, D. (Eds.) *Reflection: turning experience into learning*. London, Kogan Page Ltd, pp.7-17.

BOWN, J. & WHITE, C. J. (2010) Affect in a self-regulatory framework for language learning. *System*, 38 (3), pp.432-443.

BROWN, M. & RALPH, S. (1999) Using the DYSA programme to reduce stress and anxiety in first-year university students. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 17(3), pp. 8-13.

BRUMFIT, C. (1982) Some humanistic doubts about humanistic language teaching. In EARLY, P. (Ed.) *ELT Documents 113: 'humanistic approaches: an empirical view'*. London, The British Council, pp.11-19.

BRUMFIT, C. J. (1985) *Language and literature teaching: from practice to principle*. Oxford, Pergamon Press.

BRYMAN, A. & BURGESS, R. G. (1994) Reflections on qualitative data analysis. In BRYMAN, A. & BURGESS, R. G. (Eds.) *Analysing qualitative data*. London, Routledge, pp.216-225.

BRYMAN, A. (2004) *Social research methods*. 2nd ed. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

BRYMAN, A. (2008) *Social research methods*. 3rd ed. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

BURGESS, R. G. (1985) Issues and problems in educational research: an introduction. In BURGESS, R. G. (Ed.) *Issues in educational research: qualitative methods*. Sussex, The Falmer Press, pp.1-17.

CAROLE, A. (1992) Classrooms: goals, structures and students motivation. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 84 (3), pp.267-271.

CHANG, L. Y.-H. (2010) Group processes and EFL learners' motivation: a study of group dynamics in EFL classrooms. *TESOL Quarterly*, 44 (1), pp.129-133.

CHARMAZ, K. (2000) Grounded theory: objectivist and constructivist methods. In DENZIN, N. K. & LINCOLN, Y. S. (Eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research* Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, pp.509-535.

CHARMAZ, K. (2001) Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis. In GUBRIUM, J. F. & A.HOLSTEIN, J. (Eds.) *Handbook of interview research: context & method*. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, pp.675-694.

- CHARMAZ, K. (2003) Grounded theory: objectivist and constructivist methods. In DENZIN, N. K. & LINCOLN, Y. S. (Eds.) *Strategies of qualitative inquiry*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, pp.249-291.
- CHARMAZ, K. (2004) Grounded theory. In HESSE-BIBER, S. & LEAVY, P. (Eds.) *Approaches to qualitative research: a reader on theory and practice*. New York, Oxford University Press, pp.496-521.
- CHARMAZ, K. (2006) *Constructing grounded theory*. London, Sage.
- CHEN, J. F., WARDEN, C. A. & CHANG, H.-T. (2005) Motivators that do not motivate: the case of Chinese EFL learners and the influence of culture on motivation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39 (4), pp.609-633.
- CHENG, H.-F. & DÖRNYEI, Z. (2007) The use of motivational strategies in language instruction: the case of EFL teaching in Taiwan. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 1 (1), pp.153-174.
- CLANDININ, D. J. & CONNELLY, F. M. (2000) *Narrative inquiry: experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
- COFFEY, A. & ATKINSON, P. (1996) *Making sense of qualitative data: complementary research strategies*. London, Sage.
- COFFEY, A. (1999) *The ethnographic self*. London, Sage.
- COHEN, L., MANION, L. & MORRISON, K. (2000) *Research methods in education*. 5th ed. London, Routledge Falmer.
- COHEN, L., MANION, L. & MORRISON, K. (2007) *Research methods in education*. 6th ed. New York, Routledge
- COOK, T. (2006) *An investigation of shame and anxiety in learning English as a second language*. Ph.D. thesis, University of Southern California.
- COVINGTON, M. V. (1984) The self-worth theory of achievement motivation: findings and implications. *Elementary School Journal*, 85 (1), pp.4-20.
- COVINGTON, M. V. (1992) *Making the grade: a self-worth perspective on motivation and school reform*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- COVINGTON, M. V. (1998) *The will to learn: a guide for motivating young people*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- CRESWELL, J. W. (1998) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.

- CRESWELL, J. W. (2009) *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.
- CURRAN, C. A. (1972) *Counselling-learning: a whole-person model for education*. New York, Grune and Stratton.
- DECI, E. L. & RYAN, R. M. (1985) *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behaviour*. New York, Plenum.
- DEGAN, R. (2011) Brain-based learning: The neurological findings about the human brain that every teacher should know to be effective. Available at: <http://www.globadvantage.ipleiria.pt/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/working-paper-77>. [ Accessed 31 july 2011].
- DEGROOT, E. V. (2002) Learning through interviewing: students and teachers talk about learning and schooling. *Educational Psychologist*, 37 (1), pp.41-52.
- DENZIN, N. (1984) *On understanding emotion*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- DENZIN, N. K. & LINCOLN, Y. S. (1998) Introduction: entering the field of qualitative research. In DENZIN, N. K. & LINCOLN, Y. S. (Eds.) *The landscape of qualitative research: theories and issues*. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, pp.1-34.
- DENZIN, N. K. & LINCOLN, Y. S. (2000a) *Handbook of qualitative research*. London, Sage.
- DENZIN, N. K. & LINCOLN, Y. S. (2000b) Introduction: the discipline and practice of qualitative research. In DENZIN, N. K. & LINCOLN, Y. S. (Eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research*. London, Sage, pp.1-28.
- DENZIN, N. K. & LINCOLN, Y. S. (2003) Introduction: the discipline and practice of qualitative research. In DENZIN, N. K. & LINCOLN, Y. S. (Eds.) *The landscape of qualitative research: theories and issues*. 2nd ed. London, Sage, pp.1-45.
- DENZIN, N. K. & LINCOLN, Y. S. (2008) Introduction: the discipline and practice of qualitative research. In DENZIN, N. K. & LINCOLN, Y. S. (Eds.) *Strategies of qualitative inquiry*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, pp.1-43.
- DENZIN, N. K. (1989) *Interpretive biography*. Newbury Park, CA, Sage.
- DENZIN, N. K. (1997) *Interpretive ethnography: ethnographic practices for the 21st century*. London, Sage.
- DEWAELE, J.-M. (2005) Investigating the psychological and emotional dimensions in instructed language learning: obstacles and possibilities. *The Modern Language Journal*, 89 (3), pp.367-380.

DEWEY, J. (1897) My pedagogic creed. *School Journal*, 54 (3), pp.77-80.

DO, S. L. & SCHALLERT, D. L. (2004) Emotions and classroom talk: toward a model of the role of affect in students' experiences of classroom discussions. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 96 (4), pp.619-634.

DÖRNYEI, Z. & OTTÓ, I. (1998) Motivation in action: a process model of L2 motivation *Working Papers in Applied Linguistics*, 4, pp.43-69.

DÖRNYEI, Z. & SKEHAN, P. (2003) Individual differences in second language learning. In DOUGHTY, C. J. & LONG, M. L. (Eds.) *The handbook of second language acquisition*. Oxford, Blackwell, pp.589-630.

DÖRNYEI, Z. (1994) Motivation and motivating in the foreign language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78 (3), pp.273-284.

DÖRNYEI, Z. (1998) Motivation in second and foreign language learning. *Language Teaching*, 31 (3), pp.117-135.

DÖRNYEI, Z. (2000) Motivation in action: towards a process-oriented conceptualisation of student motivation. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 70 (4), pp.519-538.

DÖRNYEI, Z. (2001a) *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

DÖRNYEI, Z. (2001b) *Teaching and researching motivation*. Essex, Pearson Education Limited.

DÖRNYEI, Z. (2003) Attitudes, orientations, and motivations in language learning: advances in theory, research and applications. *Language Learning*, 53 (1), pp.3-32.

DÖRNYEI, Z. (2005) *The psychology of the language learner: individual differences in second language acquisition*. Mahwah, NJ, Lawrence Erlbaum.

DÖRNYEI, Z. (2007) Creating a motivating classroom environment. In CUMMINS, J. & DAVISON, C. (Eds.) *International handbook of English language teaching*. New York, Springer, pp.719-731.

DÖRNYEI, Z. (2009) The L2 Motivational Self System. In DÖRNYEI, Z. & USHIODA, E. (Eds.) *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self*. Clevedon, Multilingual Matters, pp.9-42.

EARLY, P. (Ed.) (1982) *ELT Documents 113: 'humanistic approaches: an empirical view'*. London, The British Council.

EFKLIDES, A. & PETKAKI, C. (2005) Effects of mood on students' metacognitive experiences. *Learning and Instruction*, 15 (5), pp.415-431.

EFKLIDES, A. & VOLET, S. (2005) Emotional experiences during learning: multiple, situated and dynamic. *Learning and Instruction*, 15 (5), pp.377-380.

EKMAN, P. (2003) *Emotions revealed: understanding faces and feelings*. London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

ELLIS, C. & BOCHNER, A. P. (2000) Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: researcher as subject. In DENZIN, N. K. & LINCOLN, Y. S. (Eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research*. 2nd ed. London, Sage, pp.733-768.

ELLIS, C. (1991) Sociological introspection and emotional experience. *Symbolic Interaction*, 14 (1), pp.23-50.

ELLIS, C. (2000) Creating criteria: an ethnographic short story. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 6 (2), pp.273-277.

ELLIS, C. (2007) Telling secrets, revealing lives: relational ethics in research with intimate others. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13 (1), pp.3-29.

ELLIS, C., BOCHNER, A. P., DENZIN, N. K., JR., H. L. B. G., PELIAS, R. & RICHARDSON, L. (2007) Coda: talking and thinking about qualitative research. In DENZIN, N. K. & GIARDINA, M. D. (Eds.) *Ethical futures in qualitative research: decolonizing the politics of knowledge*. Walnut Creek, CA, Left Coast Press, pp.229-267.

ELLIS, N. C. & LARSEN-FREEMAN, D. (2006) Language emergence: implications for applied linguistics-introduction to the special issue. *Applied Linguistics*, 27 (4), pp.558-589.

ELLIS, R. (1994) *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

ELLIS, R. (2004) Individual differences in second language learning. In DAVIES, A. & ELDER, C. (Eds.) *The handbook of applied linguistics*. Oxford, Blackwell, pp.525-551.

ENTWISTLE, N. J. & ENTWISTLE, A. (1991) Contrasting forms of understanding for degree examinations: the student experience and its implications. *Higher Education*, 22 (3), pp.205-227.

FAZEY, D. & FAZEY, J. (1998) Perspectives on motivation: the implications for effective learning in higher education. In BROWN, S., ARMSTRONG, S. & THOMSON, G. (Eds.) *Motivating students*. London, Kogan Page, pp.59-72.

- FLICK, U. (2002) *An introduction to qualitative research*. London, Sage.
- FOLEY, D. E. (2002) Critical ethnography: the reflexive turn. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 15 (5), pp.469-490.
- FOSTER, K., MCALLISTER, M. & O'BRIEN, L. (2006) Extending the boundaries: autoethnography as an emergent method in mental health nursing research. *International Journal of Mental Health*, 15 (1), pp.44-53.
- FOSTER, P. (1996) Observational research. In SAPSFORD, R. & JUPP, V. (Eds.) *Data collection and analysis*. London, The Open University, pp.57-93.
- FRAENKEL, J. R. & WALLEN, N. E. (2006) *How to design and evaluate research in education*. 6th ed. New York, McGraw Hill.
- FRAM, E. & PEARSE, R. (2000) 'Tough Love' teaching generates student hostility. *College Teaching*, 48 (2), p.42.
- FREEBODY, P. (2003) *Qualitative research in education*. London, Sage.
- FREIRE, P. (1996) *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. London, Penguin Books.
- GADD, N. (1998) Towards less humanistic English teaching. *ELT Journal*, 52 (3), pp.223-234.
- GAGE, N. & BELINER, D. (1992) *Educational psychology*. 5th ed. Boston, Houghton Mifflin.
- GARDNER, H. (2005) *Multiple intelligences: the theory in practice*. London, Basic Books.
- GARDNER, R. (1985) *Social psychology and second language learning: the role of attitudes and motivation*. London, Edward Arnold.
- GARDNER, R. C. & LAMBERT, W. E. (1972) *Attitudes and motivation in second language learning*. Rowley, Massachusetts, Newbury House Publishers.
- GARRET, P. & YOUNG, R. F. (2009) Theorizing affect in foreign language learning: an analysis of one learner's responses to a communicative Portuguese course. *The Modern Language Journal*, 93 (2), pp.209-226.
- GATTEGNO, C. (1972) *Teaching foreign languages in schools: the silent way*. 2nd ed. New York, Educational Solutions.

- GHANIZADEH, A. & MOAFIAN, F. (2010) The role of EFL teachers' emotional intelligence in their success. *ELT Journal*, 64 (4), pp.424-435.
- GIBBONS, C., DEMPSTER, M., & MOUTRAY, M. (2008) Stress and eustress in nursing students. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 61(3), pp.282-290.
- GLASER, B. G. & STRAUSS, A. L. (1967) *The discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago, Aldine.
- GLÄSER-ZIKUDA, M. & FUB, S. (2008) Impact of teacher competencies on student emotions: a multi-method approach. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 47 (2), pp.136-147.
- GLÄSER-ZIKUDA, M. & JÄRVELÄ, S. (2008) Application of qualitative and quantitative methods to enrich understanding of emotional and motivational aspects of learning. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 47 (2), pp.79-83.
- GLÄSER-ZIKUDA, M., FUß, S., LAUKENMANN, M., METZ, K. & RANDLER, C. (2005) Promoting students' emotion and achievement-instructional design and evaluation of the ECOLE-approach. *Learning and Instruction*, 15 (5), pp.481-495.
- GOLDSTEIN, L. & LAKE V. (2000) 'Love, love, and more love for children': exploring preservice teachers' understandings of caring. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16 (8), pp.861-872.
- GRANGER, C. A. (2004) *Silence in second language learning*. Clevedon, Multilingual Matters LTD.
- GRAVES, K. (2005) *Designing language courses: a guide for teachers*. Beijing, Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- GREGERSEN, T. S. (2007) Language learning beyond words: incorporating body language into classrooms activities. *Reflections on English Language Teaching*, 6 (1), pp.51-64.
- GUBRIUM, J. F. & HOLSTEIN, J. A. (2000) Analyzing interpretive practice. In DENZIN, N. K. & LINCOLN, Y. S. (Eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research*. London, Sage, pp.487-508.
- GUILLOTEAUX, M. J. & DÖRNYEI, Z. (2008) Motivating language learners: a classroom-oriented investigation of the effects of motivational strategies on student motivation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 42 (1), pp.55-77.
- HAMACHECK, D. (1998) Effective teachers: what they do, how they do it and the importance of self knowledge. In RICHARD, L., BRINTHAUPT, P. & M, T. (Eds.) *Role of self on teacher development*. New York, State University of New York Press, pp.189-225.

- HARGREAVES, A. & TUCKER, E. (1991) Teaching and guilt: exploring the feelings of teaching. *Teacher and Teacher Education*, 7 (5-6), pp.491-505.
- HARGREAVES, A. (1998) The emotional politics of teaching and teacher development: with implications for educational leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 1 (4), pp.315-336.
- HARGREAVES, A. (2000) Mixed emotions: teachers' perceptions of their interactions with students. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16 (8), pp. 811-826.
- HASCHER, T. (2007) Exploring students' well-being by taking a variety of looks into the classroom. *Hellenic Journal of Psychology*, 4 (3), pp.331-349.
- HASCHER, T. (2008) Quantitative and qualitative research approaches to assess student well-being. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 47 (2), pp.84-96.
- HASCHER, T. (2010) Learning and emotion: perspectives for theory and research. *European Educational Research Journal*, 9 (1), pp.13-28.
- HECKHAUSEN, H. & KUHL, J. (1985) From wishes to action: the dead ends and short cuts on the long way to action. In FRESE, M. & SABINI, J. (Eds.) *Goal directed behavior: The concept to action in psychology*. Hillsdale, NJ, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp.78-94.
- HOFSTEDE, G. (2010) Cultural dimensions. Geert Hofstede-itim. Available at: [URL:http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede\\_mexico.shtml](http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_mexico.shtml) [Accessed 10 november 2010].
- HOLLWAY, W. & JEFFERSON, T. (2000) *Doing qualitative research differently: free association, narrative and the interview method*. London, Sage.
- HOLODYSKI, M. & KRONAST, S. (2009) Shame and pride: emotions in classroom research. In RÖTTGER-RÖSSLER B AND MARKOWITSCH J. H (Eds.). *Emotions as Bio-cultural Processes*. New York: Springer, pp.371-394.
- HOLT, N. L. (2003) Representation, legitimation, and autoethnography: an autoethnographic writing story. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 2 (1), pp.18-28.
- HORWITZ, E. K. (1995) Student affective reactions and the teaching and learning of foreign languages. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 23 (7), pp.573-579.
- HORWITZ, E. K. (2001) Language anxiety and achievement. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 21, pp.112-126.



- HUBERMAN, M. & MILES, M. B. (2002) *The qualitative researcher's companion*. London, Sage.
- HURD, S. (2008) Affect and strategy use in independent language learning. In
- HURD, S. & LEWIS, T. (Eds.) *Language Learning Strategies in Independent Settings*. Bristol, Multilingual Matters, pp.218-236.
- IMAI, Y. (2010) Emotions in SLA: new insights from collaborative learning for an EFL Classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 94 (2), pp.278-292.
- IMMORDINO-YANG, M. H. & DAMASIO, A. (2007) We feel, therefore we learn: the relevance of affective and social neuroscience to education. *Mind, Brain and Education*, 1 (1), pp.3-10.
- IYENGAR, S. S. & LEPPER, M. R. (1999) Rethinking the value of choice: a cultural perspective on intrinsic motivation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 7 (3), pp. 349-366.
- JACKSON, J. (2002) Reticence in second language case discussions: anxiety and aspirations. *System*, 30 (1), pp.65-84.
- JANESICK, V. J. (2000) The choreography of qualitative research design: minuets, improvisations and crystallization. In DENZIN, N. K. & LINCOLN, Y. S. (Eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research*. 2nd ed. Thousands Oak, CA, Sage, pp.379-399.
- JÄRVENOVA, H. & JÄRVELÄ, S. (2005) How students describe the sources of their emotional and motivational experiences during the learning process: a qualitative approach. *Learning and Instruction*, 15 (5), pp.465-480.
- JOYCE, B. (1984) Dynamic disequilibrium: the Intelligence of growth. *Theory into Practice*, 23 (1), pp. 26-34.
- KAUFMAN, G. (1989) *The psychology of shame: theory and treatment of shame-based syndromes*. New York: Springer Publishing Co.
- KERR, P. (2007) 'Humanising' -what's in a word? , *Humanising Language Teaching Magazine* [online], volume 9 (3). Available at: [URL:http://www.hltmag.co.uk/may07/mart04.htm](http://www.hltmag.co.uk/may07/mart04.htm) [Accessed 14 june 2008].
- KING, N. (1994) The qualitative research interview. In CASSELL, C. & SYMON, G. (Eds.) *Qualitative methods in organisational research: a practical guide*. London, Sage, pp.14-36.

- KITANO, K. (2001) Anxiety in the college Japanese language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 85 (4), pp.549-566.
- KLEINGINNA, P. & KLEINGINNA, A. (1981) A categorized list of emotion definitions, with suggestions for a consensual definition. *Motivation and Emotion*, 5 (4), pp. 345-379.
- KVALE, S. (1996) *Interviews: an introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.
- KVALE, S. (2009) *Interviews: learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.
- LACKNEY, A. (2002) 12 Design principals on brain-based learning research. Available at <http://www.designshare.com/Research/BrainBasedLearn98.htm> [Accessed 31 july 2011].
- LAMB, T. (2009) Controlling learning: learners' voices and relationships between motivation and learner autonomy. In PEMBERTON, R., TOOGOOD S., & BARTFIELD, A. (Eds.) *Maintaining control: autonomy and language learning*. Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, pp-67-86.
- LAMBIE, H. (2009) Emotion experience, rational action, and self-knowledge. *Emotion Review*, 1 (3), pp. 272-280.
- LARSEN-FREEMAN, D. & CAMERON, L. (2008) Research methodology on language development from a complex systems perspective. *The Modern Language Journal*, 92 (2), pp.200-213.
- LARSEN-FREEMAN, D. & LONG, M. H. (1991) *An introduction to second language acquisition research*. London, Longman.
- LARSEN-FREEMAN, D. (1991) Second language acquisition research: staking out the territory. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25 (2), pp.315-350.
- LARSEN-FREEMAN, D. (2000) *Techniques and principles in language teaching*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- LARSEN-FREEMAN, D. (2001) Individual cognitive/affective learner contributions and differential success in second language acquisition. In BREEN, M. P. (Ed.) *Learner contributions to language learning*. Essex, Pearson Education Limited, pp.12-24.
- LEE, I. (2007) Preparing pre-service English teachers for reflective practice. *ELT Journal*, 61 (4), pp.321-329.
- LEI, Q. (2007) EFL teachers' factors and students affect. *US-China Education Review*, 4 (3), pp.60-67.

- LEITCH, R. (1999) The shaming game: the role of shame and shaming rituals in education and development. Paper presented at the annual conference of the American Educational Research Association, April 19-23, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.
- LIEBERMAN, D. A. & REMEDIOS, R. (2007) Do undergraduates' motives for studying change as they progress through their degrees? *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 77 (2), pp.379-395.
- LINCOLN, Y. S. & GUBA, E. G. (1985) *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, Sage.
- LINNEBRICK-GARCIA, L. & PEKRUN, R. (2011) Students' emotions and academic engagement: introduction to the special issue. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 36 (1), pp.1-3.
- LITTLEWOOD, W. (2000) Do Asian students really want to listen and obey? *ELT Journal*, 54 (1), pp.31-35.
- LOZANOV, G. (1978) *Suggestology and outlines of suggestopedy*. New York, Gotdon and Breach.
- MACINTYRE, P. & GARDNER, R. (1991) Methods and results in the study of anxiety and language learning: a review of the literature. *Language Learning*, 41 (1), pp.85-117.
- MACINTYRE, P. (2002) Motivation, anxiety and emotion in second language acquisition. In ROBINSON, P. (Ed.) *Individual differences and instructed language learning*. Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing pp.45-68.
- MALEY, A. (1983) "I Got Religion!": evangelism in TEFL. In CLARKE, M. A. & HANDSCOMBE, J. (Eds.) *On TESOL '82 Pacific perspectives on language learning and teaching II*. Washington, D.C., TESOL, pp.77-83.
- MANTECA, E. (2006) Programas de estudio: Lengua extranjera Inglés. México, DF, Secretaría de Educación Pública.
- MARKUS, H. & NURIUS, P. (1986) Possible selves. *American Psychologist*, 41 (9), pp.954-969.
- MASLOW, A. (1943) A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50, pp.370-396.
- MCDONOUGH, S. (2007) Motivation in ELT. *ELT Journal*, 61 (4), pp.369-371.

- MCILVEEN, P. (2008) Autoethnography as a method for reflexive research and practice in vocational psychology. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 17 (2), pp.13-20.
- MEGFORD, K. (2006) Caught with a fake ID: ethical questions about slippage in autoethnography. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12 (5), pp.853-864.
- MERRIAM, S. B. (2009) *Qualitative research: a guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass.
- MERTENS, D. M. (1998) *Research methods in education and psychology: integrating diversity with quantitative & qualitative approaches*. London, Sage.
- MEYER, D. K. & TURNER, J. C. (2002) Discovering emotion in classroom motivation research. *Educational Psychologist*, 37 (2), pp.107-114.
- MEYER, D. K. & TURNER, J. C. (2006) Re-conceptualizing emotion and motivation to learn in classroom contexts. *Educational Psychology Review*, 18 (14), pp.377-390.
- MILLER, J. L. (1998) Autobiography as a Queer curriculum practice. In PINAR, W. F. (Ed.) *Queer theory in education*. Mahwah, N.J., Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp.365-374.
- MISRA, R., MCKEAN, M., WEST, S., & RUSSO, T. (2000) Academic stress of college students: comparison of student and faculty perceptions. *College Student Journal*, 34(2), pp. 236-245.
- MONROE, A. (2009) Shame solutions: how shame impacts on school-aged children and what teachers can do to help. *The Educational Forum*, 73 (1), pp.58-66.
- MOSKOWITZ, G. (1978) *Caring and sharing in the foreign language classroom*. Rowley, MA, Newbury House.
- NAIMAN, N., FROHLICH, M., STERN, H. H. & TODESCO, A. (1978) *The good language learner*. Toronto, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.
- NEKVAPIL, J. (2003) Language biographies and the analysis of language situations: on the life of the German community in the Czech Republic. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 162, pp.63-83.
- NEWSTWEAD, S. E. (1992) A study of two 'quick and easy' methods of measuring individual differences in student learning. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 62 (3), pp.299-312.

NOELS, K. A., CLEMENT, R. & PELLETIER, L. G. (1999) Perceptions of teachers' communicative style and students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. *The Modern Language Journal*, 83 (1), pp.23-34.

NOELS, K. A., PELLETIER, L. G., CLEMENT, R. & VALLERAND, R. J. (2000) Why are you learning a second language? Motivational orientations and self-determination theory. *Language Learning*, 50 (1), pp.57-85.

OGILVIE, D. (1987) The undesired self: a neglected variable in personality research. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 52 (2), pp. 379-385.

OPIE, C. (2004) What is educational research? In OPIE, C. (Ed.) *Doing educational research: a guide for first time researchers*. London, Sage, pp.1-14.

OWEN-SMITH, P. (2004) What is cognitive-affective learning (CAL)? *Journal of Cognitive Affective Learning*, 1 (1), p.1.

OXFORD, R. L. (1995) When emotion meets (meta)cognition in language learning histories. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 23 (7), pp.581-594.

PATTERSON, C. H. (1973) *Humanistic education*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall Inc.

PAVLENKO, A. & LANTOLF, J. P. (2000) Second language learning as participation and the (re)construction of selves. In LANTOLF, J. P. (Ed.) *Sociocultural theory and second language learning*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp.155-177.

PAVLENKO, A. (2002) Narrative study: whose story is it anyway? *TESOL Quarterly*, 36 (2), pp.213-218.

PAVLENKO, A. (2007) Autobiographic narratives as data in applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics*, 28 (2), pp.163-188.

PEKRUN, R. (2000) *A Social-cognitive, control-value theory of achievement emotions*. Amsterdam, Elsevier Science B.V.

PEKRUN, R., GOETZ, T., TITZ, W. & PERRY, R. P. (2002) Academic emotions in students' self-regulated learning and achievement: a program of qualitative and quantitative research. *Educational Psychologist*, 37 (2), pp.91-105.

PERIODICO OFICIAL (1991) Periódico Oficial. Gobierno del Estado de Quintana Roo.

- POWELL, J. P. (1985) Autobiographical learning. In BOUD, D., KEOGH, R. & WALKER, D. (Eds.) *Reflection: turning experience into learning*. London, Kogan Page Ltd., pp.41-51.
- PRINZ, J. (2005) Are emotions feelings? *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 12 (8), pp.9-25.
- QSR INTERNATIONAL (2007) Nvivo: Qualitative data analysis software. Version 7.
- REED-DANAHAY, D. E. (1997) Introduction. In REED-DANAHAY, D. E. (Ed.) *Auto/ethnography: rewriting the self and the social*. Oxford, Berg, pp.1-17.
- RICHARDS, J. & RODGERS, T. (2001) *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. New York, Cambridge University Press.
- RICHARDS, R. (2008) Writing the othered self: autoethnography and the problem of objectification in writing about illness and disability. *Qualitative Health Research*, 18 (12), pp.1717-1728.
- RICHARDSON, L. & PIERRE, E. A. S. (2005) Writing: a method of inquiry. In DENZIN, N. K. & LINCOLN, Y. S. (Eds.) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, pp.959-978.
- RICHARDSON, L. (1994) Writing: a method of inquiry. In DENZIN, N. K. & LINCOLN, Y. S. (Eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research*. London, Sage, pp.516-529.
- RICHARDSON, L. (2000a) Evaluating ethnography. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 6 (2), pp.253-255.
- RICHARDSON, L. (2000b) Introduction-Assessing alternative modes of qualitative and ethnographic research: how do we judge? Who judges? *Qualitative Inquiry*, 6 (2), pp.251-252.
- RINVOLUCRI, M. (1984) *Grammar games*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- RIVERS, W. M. (1983) *Communicating naturally in a second language*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- ROGERS, C. & FREIBERG, H. J. (1994) *Freedom to learn*. 3rd ed. New York, Macmillan/Merril.
- ROGERS, C. (1962) The interpersonal relationship: the core of guidance. *Harvard Educational Review*, 32 (4), pp.416-429.
- RUBIN, J. (1975) What the 'Good Language Learner' can teach us. *TESOL Quarterly*, 9 (1), pp.41-51.

- RYAN, R. M. & DECI, E. L. (2000) Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55 (1), pp.68-78.
- SALONEN, P., LEHTINEN, E. & OLKINUORA, E. (1998) Expectations and beyond: the development of motivation and learning in a classroom context. *Advances in Research on Teaching*, 7, pp.111-150.
- SANSONE, C. & THOMAN, D. B. (2005) Does what we feel affect what we learn? Some answers and new questions. *Language and Instruction*, 15 (5), pp.507-515.
- SCHERER, K. R. (2005) What are emotions? And how can they be measured? *Social Science Information*, 44 (4), pp.695-729.
- SCHÖN, D. A. (1983) *The reflective practitioner: how professionals think in action*. London, Temple Smith.
- SCHUMANN, F. (1980) Diary of a language learner: a further analysis. In SCARCELLA, R. C. & KRASHEN, S. D. (Eds.) *Research in second language acquisition : selected papers of the Los Angeles second language acquisition research forum*. Rowley, Mass, Newbury House, pp.51-57.
- SCHUMANN, J. H. (1998) *The neurobiology of affect in language*. Oxford, Blackwell.
- SCHUTZ, P. A. & DECUIR, J. T. (2002) Inquiry on emotions in education. *Educational Psychologist*, 37 (2), pp.125-134.
- SCHUTZ, P. A. & LANEHART, S. L. (2002) Introduction: emotions in education. *Educational Psychologist*, 37 (2), pp.67-68.
- SCHWANDT, T. A. (1993) Theory for the moral sciences: crisis of identity and purpose. In FLINDERS, D. J. & MILLS, G. E. (Eds.) *Theory and concepts in qualitative research*. New York, Teachers College Press, pp.5-23.
- SCHWANDT, T. A. (2000) Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry. In DENZIN, N. K. & LINCOLN, Y. S. (Eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research*. London, Sage, pp.189-213.
- SELYE, H. (1976) Forty years of stress research: principal remaining problems and misconceptions. *CMA Journal*, 3 (115), pp. 53-56.
- SEP (1993) Ley General de Educación. *Revista Iberoamericana de Educación* [online], volume 3 (1). Available at: [URL:http://www.oei.es/oeivirt/rie03a06.htm](http://www.oei.es/oeivirt/rie03a06.htm) [Accessed 22 Mayo 2009].

- SHOAIB, A. & DÖRNYEI, Z. (2004) Affect in lifelong learning: exploring L2 motivation as a dynamic process. In BENSON, P. & NUNAN, D. (Eds.) *Learners' stories*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp.23-41.
- SILVERMAN, D. (2000) *Doing qualitative research: a practical handbook*. London, Sage.
- SILVERMAN, D. (2006) *Interpreting qualitative data*. London, Sage.
- SINCLAIR, B. (2006) *Humanistic approaches to language teaching*. Nottingham, The University of Nottingham.
- SKEHAN, P. (1989) *Individual differences in second-language learning*. London, Edward Arnold.
- SO, S. (2004) Emotion processes in second language acquisition. In BENSON, P. & NUNAN, D. (Eds.) *Learners' stories*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp.42-55.
- SPARKES, A. C. (2000) Autoethnography and narratives of self: reflections on criteria in action. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 17 (1), pp.21-43.
- STERN, H. H. (1975) What can we learn from the good language learner? *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 31 (4), pp.304-318.
- STEVICK, E. W. (1982) Humanism. In EARLY, P. (Ed.) *ELT Documents 113: 'humanistic approaches: an empirical view'*. London, The British Council, pp.7-10.
- STEVICK, E. W. (1990) *Humanism in language teaching*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- STRAUSS, A. & CORBIN, J. (1998) *Basics of qualitative research: techniques and procedures for developing Grounded Theory*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks; CA, Sage.
- TAYLOR, S. J. & BODGAN, R. (1998) *Introduction to qualitative research methods: a guidebook and resource*. 3rd ed. New York, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- TSE, L. (2000) Student perceptions of foreign language study: a qualitative analysis of foreign language autobiographies. *The Modern Language Journal*, 84 (1), pp.69-84.
- TURNER, J. & HUSMAN, J. (2008) Emotional and cognitive self-regulation following academic shame. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 20 (1), pp.138-173.



- TURNER, J. C., MEYER, D. K. & SCHWEINLE, A. (2003) The importance of emotion in theories of motivation: empirical, methodological and theoretical considerations from a goal theory perspective. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 39 (4-5), pp.375-393.
- UNDERHILL, A. (1989) Process in humanistic education. *ELT Journal*, 43 (4), pp.250-260.
- UNDERHILL, N. (1983) Commonsense in oral testing: reliability, validity and affective factors In CLARKE, M. A. & HANDSCOMBE, J. (Eds.) *On TESOL '82 Pacific perspectives on language learning and teaching II*. Washington DC, TESOL, pp.125-139.
- USHIODA, E. (2003) Motivation as a socially mediated process. In LITTLE, D., RIDLEY, J. & USHIODA, E. (Eds.) *Learner autonomy in the foreign language classroom: learner, teacher, curriculum and assessment*. Dublin, Ireland, Authentik, pp.90-102.
- VALLE, S. (2008) Enfrenta desafíos plan sobre ingles. *REFORMA*. México, DF.
- VARLANDER, S. (2008) The role of students' emotions in formal feedback situations. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 13 (2), pp.145-156.
- WALFORD, G. (2004) Finding the limits: autoethnography and being and Oxford university proctor. *Qualitative Research*, 4 (3), pp.403-417.
- WALL, S. (2008) Easier said than done: writing an autoethnography. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 7 (1), pp.38-53.
- WALLIMAN, N. (2001) *Your research project: a step by step guide for the first time researcher*. London, Sage.
- WEINER, B. (1980) *Human motivation*. New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- WEINER, B. (1992) *Human motivation: metaphors, theories and research*. Newbury Park, CA, Sage.
- WELLINGTON, J. (2000) *Educational research: contemporary issues and practical approaches*. London, Continuum.
- WENSTEIN, C. (1998) 'I want to be nice, but I have to be mean': exploring prospective teachers' conceptions of caring and order. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 14 ( 2) pp. 153-163.
- WILLIAMS, M. & BURDEN, R. (1999) Students' developing conceptions of themselves as language learners. *The Modern Language Journal*, 83 (2), pp.193-201.

WILLIAMS, M. & BURDEN, R. L. (1997) *Psychology for language teachers: a social constructivist approach*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

WILLIAMS, M., BURDEN, R. & LANVERS, U. (2002) 'French is the language of love and stuff': student perceptions of issues related to motivation in learning a foreign language. *British Educational Research Journal*, 28 (4), pp.503-528.

WILLIAMS, M., BURDEN, R., POULET, G. & MAUN, L. (2004) Learners' perceptions of their successes and failures in foreign language learning. *Language Learning*, 30 (1), pp.19-29.

WOLCOTT, H. F. (1994) *Transforming qualitative data*. Thousands Oak, CA, Sage.

WOODROW, L. (2006) Anxiety and speaking English as a second language. *RELC Journal*, 37 (3), pp.308-328.

WYATT, J. (2006) Psychic distance, consent, and other ethical issues. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12 (4), pp.813-818.

XIE, X. (2010) Why are students quiet? Looking at the Chinese context and below. *ELT Journal*, 64 (1), pp.10-20.

YAN, J. X. & HORWITZ, E. K. (2008) Learners' perceptions of how anxiety interacts with personal and instructional factors to influence their achievement in English: a qualitative analysis of EFL learners in China. *Language Learning*, 58 (1), pp.151-183.

YOUNG, D. J. (1991) Creating a low-anxiety classroom environment: what does language anxiety research suggest? *The Modern Language Journal*, 75 (4), pp.426-439.

ZHANG, X. & HEAD, K. (2010) Dealing with learner reticence in the speaking class. *ELT Journal*, 64 (1), pp.1-9.

**Appendix A**

**Previous English language studies questionnaire**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Pseudonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Personal data**

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_

Birthplace \_\_\_\_\_

Length of time living in Quintana Roo \_\_\_\_\_

Living with family \_\_\_\_\_ friends \_\_\_\_\_ relatives \_\_\_\_\_

Do you work? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ full time \_\_\_\_\_ part time \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**Educational background**

Primary school public \_\_\_\_\_ private \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary school public \_\_\_\_\_ private \_\_\_\_\_

Preparatory school public \_\_\_\_\_ private \_\_\_\_\_

English learning experience years \_\_\_\_\_ months \_\_\_\_\_

Was this programme your first choice to study at university? \_\_\_\_\_

Why?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix B**

### **A participant's personal narrative**

#### **HANNA**

Esto se trata de una joven que desde niña soñó con estudiar inglés, el motivo que la llevó a escoger la carrera de Lengua Inglesa se debió a que desde niña soñaba con hablar el inglés, el aprenderlo la motivaba a realizar todas sus actividades, el no fallarle a sus padres fue otro motivo, pero su único problema que tuvo y que la llevaba a sentirse insegura de no poder realizar lo que ella quería fue que como no estudio en escuelas más preparadas su inglés era muy básico porque los maestros no lo enseñaban, el miedo de expresarse y sentir que no iba a poder, eso la llevaba a intimidarse más. Pues su vida no ha sido tan fácil porque a ella le hubiera gustado tener mejores oportunidades donde hubiera aprendido mas el inglés, el tomar un curso antes pero nunca pudo porque vivía lejos de la ciudad, pero aun eso mismo la llevo con más ganas a seguir estudiando, porque su mente pasaba de que como no iba a poder seguir estudiando y eso es lo que ella quería. Así que una vez estando ya en la universidad decido echarle más ganas, dedicarse a estudiar más para lograr sus objetivos pero aun no supera todo lo que ella quiere porque no tiene un buen manejo del inglés, en los primeros días que entro a estudiar la universidad se sentía muy contenta pero a la vez acorralada porque no sabía qué hacer si ni siquiera podía entender lo que la maestra explicaba en clase, se sentía muy frustrada. Aun ahora así se siente pero ya menos porque ha podido lograr entender más el inglés. También se intimidaba estar enfrente de sus compañeros al realizar alguna conversación y no poder pronunciar bien las palabras pero eso ya casi lo va superando y espera poder lograrlo bien con todos sus esfuerzos que realiza. Por un tiempo pensó en renunciar de la carrera y estudiar otra, porque sentía que no podía y que no iba a poder pero gracias a los consejos de sus padres el apoyarla y compartir todos sus momentos con ellos se sentía más desahogada y se propuso que tenía que lograr todos sus objetivos. Teniendo más desempeño dedicándole más provecho a todo lo que haga, teniendo en cuenta que todo se puede realizar, aun cuando le haga falta lo que más desee. Sus amigos son otro motivo para realizar sus sueños porque ellos la apoyan en cualquier momento, así que seguirá luchando para lograr sus más grandes sueños y poder salir adelante hasta cumplirlos.

## **Appendix C**

### **Semi-structured interview guide**

1. How would you describe your language learning experience during this first year of studying the ELT programme? Why?
2. Has your experience in this first year changed your original motivation? How? Why?
3. Can you recall any emotional reactions experienced during this first year?
4. What situations originated these affective reactions?
5. How did you behave when experiencing an emotional reaction?
6. Did these emotional reactions interfere with your language learning classes? How?
7. Did any of your emotional reactions have an influence on your motivation? How? Why do you think this happened?
8. Who/what was responsible for the way you reacted?
9. What did you do about those reactions? How did you manage them?
10. Do you consider your emotional reactions were important to your language learning motivation?
11. How do you think your motivation could have been improved?
12. Who do you think is responsible for maintaining that original motivation you brought to the ELT programme? Why?
13. What keeps (or would keep) your motivational energy high?
14. Have any of your previous ideas about learning English changed in this first year? Why?
15. What have you gained from being involved in this research study?

## Appendix D

### PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

**Project title:** Emotion and Language Learning: an Exploration of Experience and Motivation in a Mexican University Context

**Researcher's name:** Mtra. Mariza G. Méndez-López

**Supervisor's name:** Dra. Barbara Sinclair

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.
- I understand that I will be audio taped during the interview.
- I understand that data will be stored in audio and text form during the completion of the research and that I may have access to my personal data, if required.
- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

**Signed** .....

**Print name** ..... **Date** .....

#### Contact details

Researcher: marizam@ugroo.mx phone (983 125 8649)

Supervisor: Barbara.Sinclair@nottingham.ac.uk

Research Ethics Coordinator: roger.murphy@nottingham.ac.uk

## **Appendix E**

### **RESEARCH INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS**

**Researcher:** Mtra. Mariza G. Méndez López

**Research title:** Emotion and Language Learning: An Exploration of Experience and Motivation in a Mexican University Context

You are invited to participate in a research study that explores the role of affective reactions (feelings and emotions) in the motivation of foreign language learners in México. Your participation in this study requires two interviews and 10 class observations. Class observations will be done without interfering with regular class activities. The duration of the interviews will be of approximately 60 minutes. These interviews will be audio taped and transcribed with the purpose of capturing and maintaining an accurate record of your words. Your name will not be disclosed to anyone.

This study will be conducted by the researcher Mariza Méndez López, a doctoral candidate at the University of Nottingham. The interviews will be undertaken at a time and location that is mutually suitable.

#### **Benefits**

This research will hopefully contribute to a greater understanding of the role of affective reactions in the motivation of foreign language learners in Mexico, and so the potential benefit of this study is the improvement of FLT practice in Mexico.

#### **Data storage**

Under no circumstances will you be identified by name in the course of this research study, or in any future publication of results. Every effort will be made that all information provided by you will be treated as strictly confidential. All data will be coded and securely stored, and will be used for professional purposes only.

#### **Results**

This research study is to be submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education at the University of Nottingham, UK. The results of this study will be published as a thesis. Information may be used for educational purposes in professional presentations and educational publications.

## **Appendix F**

### **Data generation plan**

#### **Research**

Language learning motivation in Mexican University EFL students: the influence of affect during instructed learning.

#### **Purpose**

To explore the emotional reactions of a group of students of the ELT major in a Southeast Mexican university during their second term, in order to gain a deep understanding of the fluctuation in learners' motivation and how emotional reactions affect it positively or negatively.

#### **Location**

Mayche University

#### **Period**

August 31 – December 5, 2009.

### **PHASE 1**

#### **Research question:**

What was the students' initial motivation for studying the ELT programme and what were the origins of this?

**Data generation method:** Autoethnography

**Data generated:** Students' personal narratives  
(written text 500-800 words per participant)

**Objective:** This method will provide me with background information to understand the participants' motivation development, expectancies and perceptions in their foreign language learning process.



## **Autoethnography generation plan**

### **Objectives**

- To raise awareness of emotions in learning processes;
- To develop an understanding of autoethnography as a research method;
- To assist participants in the writing of two personal narratives.

### **Session 1**

August 31, 2009 (50 minutes)

Students will be introduced to the topic of emotions in foreign language learning.

### **Procedure**

- The researcher will softly play some gentle reflective music, and will ask students to close their eyes and go back to their first day at university to start their ELT programme.
- The researcher will then start asking students to remember which classroom they were in, who they talked to and how it felt. The researcher should be prepared since the activity could evoke positive and negative emotional experiences. Tell students to treat noise as wallpaper.
  1. relaxation
  2. script
  3. drawing
  4. sharing
- Students will then be asked to open their eyes and report to a classmate what they experienced on that first day, what emotions they can recall having experienced and the reasons for those.
- The researcher will then introduce the topic of emotions in learning experiences in schools through an awareness-raising activity.
- Finally, the researcher will ask some students to share some of the emotions experienced during their foreign language learning on the ELT programme.

### **Materials**

Tape recorder, soft music, emotional learning experience work-sheet

## **Session 2**

September 2, 2009 (40 minutes)

Students will be introduced to autoethnography as a research method. The researcher will introduce the topic through her two emotional moments included in Chapter Two about autoethnography. (self + culture)

### **Procedure**

- Working in pairs, students will be asked to read the two emotional moments about my foreign language learning experience. (Each student will have a different one.)
- After reading the two narratives, students will be asked to report to their partner what his/her reaction was.
- Students will then be asked to share their reactions with the whole group.
- The researcher will explain what the objective of writing those narratives were, the ethical procedures followed during the writing and why it is necessary to protect yourself and the people involved in any autoethnography: feeling "not naked", self-disclosure implications, how can you tell your story without feeling vulnerable?

### **Materials**

Researchers' personal narratives about two emotional moments in her foreign language learning experience.

---

## **Session 3**

September 4, 2009 (60 minutes)

Students will be instructed on how to write their autoethnographies.

### **Procedure**

- The researcher will start the session reviewing the conclusions of session two. She will then ask some students why they are studying the ELT programme.
- After some students have shared their motivations with the whole class, participants will be asked to close their eyes while soft, relaxing music will be played.
- The researcher will ask students to go back to those special moments that raised in them the desire to study the ELT programme. Students

will be asked to recall who were they with, where they were, what was happening, how they felt, and what or who inspired them to study the ELT programme.

- After the visualisation activity, students will be asked to start writing some ideas for their personal narratives. They will be asked to tell their motivation development story using autoethnography as a research tool. After students have written some ideas and decided which events to focus on, they will be asked to do the task individually at home.
- Students will have a week for this task. The researcher will review their stories and will suggest some amendments if necessary. Students will be asked to follow ethical guidelines while writing their personal narratives.

### **Materials**

Tape recorder, soft music.

**PHASE 2**

**Research questions:**

- What were the students' perceptions of their emotions about and motivation for language learning during the second term?
  
- To what extent has the students' motivation in the second term of study been influenced by incidents which caused an affective reaction during classroom instruction?

**Data generation instrument:** Students' Emotional Experiences Journals (SEEJ)

<b>Students'</b>	<b>Emotional</b>	<b>Experiences</b>	<b>Journal</b>
<p><b>Date:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Most learners experience different emotions during their daily learning classes. It is useful to keep a record of your different feelings, emotions and mood changes, and to reflect on the situations that made you feel that way...</b></p> <p><b>1. What emotions have you felt this week in your English class?</b></p> <p><b>2. Which of the emotions you have noted above did you feel the most strongly?</b></p> <p><b>3. Can you explain what happened and how you came to feel this way?</b></p> <p><b>4. What effects did/has this had on your motivation to learn English?</b></p> <p><b>5. What did you do about it?</b></p>			

Data generated: Students' journal entries

Objective: Journals will provide me with specific information about the types of emotions students experienced (positive or negative) during instructed learning in their second term, what the causes of those emotions were, how students reacted to those events and if those events had influenced their motivation.

### **Journal writing session**

#### **Objectives**

- To allow students to familiarise themselves with the SEEJ format;
- Writing one journal entry so students can familiarise themselves with the format and understand the information expected from them.

#### **Session 1**

September 7, 2009 (50 minutes)

Students will be instructed on how to write a journal entry.

#### **Procedure**

- Students will be given a SEEJ format sheet. They will be asked to read it and ask any questions they may have.
- After all questions have been answered, students will be asked to remember an emotional event they experienced during the first term of the ELT programme and practice writing it using the SEEJ format.
- Students will be asked to follow the same ethical guidelines used in their autoethnography writing.
- The researcher will review participants' entries as they finish and will give individual participants feedback on how to improve their entries.

**Materials** SEEJ format

Students will be asked to fill in the SEEJ electronically and send it to my e-mail account. Students will be asked to report as many emotional events as they wish every two weeks. The entries will be in Spanish so they can be able to express themselves freely without any vocabulary restrictions. Students will be asked to focus on those emotional moments that made them feel more or less motivated. The first three entries will be monitored in order to ensure participants are focusing on the information I asked them for. Students who are not focusing on emotional events will be given feedback on how to report emotional moments in the journal. Students will also be advised on writing about their emotional experiences without mentioning any names of peers or teachers involved in those events. Students will focus only on emotionally relevant situations in classroom instruction during the two-week period. Students will be asked to report positive and negative emotional experiences so both aspects can be explored. However, students will be asked to report those events they considered to have influenced their motivational energy the most.

Journals will allow students to have time to think back on their learning activities and reflect on those moments that made them feel in certain ways during class instruction. By having the time to write and think on those moments, students will exercise reflection, which could lead to more awareness about them as students and how their motivation has been influenced positively or negatively. I consider that this can raise students' awareness of their learning strengths and weaknesses which could result in the development of a motivational strategy to overcome some future events in their learning process.

### **PHASE 3**

#### **Research questions:**

-Which incidents had the greatest influence on the students' emotional responses and motivation during the classroom instruction in the second term? Why?

-To whom or what do students attribute the causes of their affective reactions during classroom instruction in the second term?

-What did the students do to manage their emotional responses?

-In what ways has involvement in the research study affected the students' perceptions of themselves and their motivation for language learning?

**Data generation method:** Semi-structured interviews

**Data generated:** Interview transcripts

#### **Objective:**

Interviews will allow me to explore the influence of students' emotional experiences during their first year on their motivation. Interviews will focus on events that caused emotional reactions in students, and how important they were to their motivation. The interviews also have the purpose of identifying to what or whom students attribute their emotional reactions during instructed language learning as well as finding out if their involvement in the study had any impact on their language learning motivation awareness.

## **Semi-structured interview guide**

### **Objective**

- To explore the role of students' emotional reactions during their first year of the ELT programme and the effects of these on their motivation.

### **Sessions**

November 23 – December 4

60 minutes approximately for each interview

### **Procedure**

- Interviews will be held in a café at times convenient for students so they can feel relaxed and not pressured in an academic environment.
- Students will be informed before the interview starts about the purpose and focus of it. Students will be assured of the confidentiality of the study data.
- In order to establish a relaxing atmosphere, the researcher will start with some introductory questions such as: Tell me about your experience of studying the ELT programme; can you remember an occasion when you felt really happy in your foreign language learning process; what would you like to do after you finish your degree?
- Interviews are expected to last for about an hour; however, it depends on the way each interview goes. Some participants may be more willing to share important or relevant information so these interviews will take more time.
- Some notes about the atmosphere during the interview and about facial or corporal gestures will be written down after the interview. Some researcher's reflections may also be written.
- Interviews will be transcribed as soon as possible after they are conducted.
- After transcription students will have the opportunity to amend or expand any of the information revealed if desired.



Appendix G

JOURNAL DATA CODES (3 DATA SETS )

THREE NODES		FREE NODES	FREQUENCY	
1. EMOTIONS IN FLL				
1.1		perceived causes of emotional reactions		
1.1.1		fear of peers mocking	19	5
1.1.2		fear of speaking English	55	15
1.1.3		experiencing difficult family situations	12	9
1.1.4		not understanding English	23	4
1.1.5		experiencing love problems	8	0
1.1.6		comparisons with peers	38	15
1.1.7		teacher's attitude	12	15
1.1.8		teacher's feedback approach	6	2
1.1.9		parental disappointment	2	1
1.1.10		living alone for the first time	5	0
1.1.11		taking exams	8	48
	1.1.11.1	rigid grading system	14	7
	1.1.11.2	unexpected results	13	7
	1.1.11.3	oral performance in exams	0	6

---

**2. EFFECTS OF EMOTIONAL REACTIONS**

<b>2.1. positive effects of positive emotions</b>			
2.1.1.	feeling confident	38	21 16
2.1.2.	group cohesion	6	7 1
2.1.3.	self-efficacy feelings	16	16 7
<b>2.2 negative effects of positive emotions</b>			
2.2.1	resting on their laurels	3	0 0
<b>2.3 positive effects of negative emotions</b>			
2.3.1	developing learning awareness	36	10 4
2.3.2	developing learning strategies	49	22 8
2.3.2.1	affective strategies	13	2 2
2.3.2.2	cognitive strategies	9	2 2
2.3.2.3	communicative strategies	1	1 0
2.3.2.4	compensation strategies	3	0 0
2.3.2.5	metacognitive strategies	25	12 3
2.3.2.6	social strategies	8	4 0
2.3.3	developing sense of responsibility	17	11 2
2.3.4	developing motivational strategies		

2.3.4.1	emotional self-regulation	29	14	14
2.3.4.2	self-encouragement	42	7	14
2.3.4.3	determination to succeed	28	10	8
2.3.4.4	having a goal	17	2	5
2.3.4.5	peer encouragement	15	0	1
2.4	negative effects of negative emotions			
2.4.1	doubts about their degree choice	10	3	1
2.4.2	fear of peers mocking	19	5	9
2.4.3	fear of speaking English	55	5	15
2.4.4	feeling insecure	58	23	11
2.4.5	lack of group cohesion	12	6	6
2.5	endurance of emotions			
2.5.1	short-lived	8	7	12
2.5.2	long-lasting	12	0	0

### 3. SOURCES OF MOTIVATION

3.1.	comparisons with peers	38	15	12
3.2.	parental disappointment	2	0	1
3.3.	having economic limitations	8	5	5

3.4. experiencing difficult family situations	12	9	7
3.5. fear of peers mocking	19	5	9
3.6. motivating learning activities	17	10	6

4. TEACHER IMPACT

4.1. assessment issues	34	21	7
4.2. classroom management	9	9	0
4.3. teacher's feedback approach	6	7	5
4.4. rigid grading system	14	7	6
4.5. positive learning environment issues	25	13	3
4.6. negative learning environment issues	34	11	14
4.7. teaching approach	5	5	0
4.8. teacher attitude	12	15	4
4.9. teacher knowledge	2	0	0

5. CRITICAL INCIDENTS

5.1 writing feedback incident	12	8	0
-------------------------------	----	---	---



2.2.2	self-efficacy feelings	16
2.2.3	positive learning environment	13
2.3	positive effects of negative emotions	8
2.3.1	developing learning awareness	32
2.3.2	developing learning strategies	22
2.3.2.1	affective strategies	9
2.3.2.2	metacognitive strategies	7
2.3.2.3	social strategies	
2.3.3	developing motivational strategies	35
2.3.3.1	emotional self-regulation	28
2.3.3.2	self-encouragement	
2.3.3.3	turning negative emotions into motivational energy	44
2.3.3.4	exercising reflection	44
2.3.3.5	setting a goal	12
2.3.3.6	determination to succeed	37
2.3.3.7	developing sense of responsibility	19
2.3.3.8	developing resilience	63
2.4	endurance of emotions	21

---

### 3. SOURCES OF MOTIVATION

3.1.	commitment to parents	18
3.2.	having economic pressures	19
3.3.	motivating learning activities	9
3.4.	positive experiences with previous teachers	20
3.5.	being praised by teachers	6
3.6.	having a goal	12

3.7. determination to succeed	37
3.8. wanting to be an English teacher	26
3.9. securing a better economic future	11
3.10. obtaining good marks	8
3.11. getting a university degree	11
3.12. cultural value of education	14
3.13. experiencing difficult family situations	5
3.14. emotions as a motivation force	16
3.15. wanting to be able to speak English	5
<b>4. CRITICAL INCIDENT</b>	
4.1 writing feedback incident	2
<b>5. MOTIVATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY</b>	
5.1 self-responsibility	34
5.2 a collective responsibility (family, friends, teachers)	22
<b>6. OUTCOMES OF PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH</b>	
6.1 reflecting on learning process	16
6.2 development of learning strategies	3
6.3 desire to be a better student and person	6
6.4 knowing themselves	12
6.5 exercising emotional self-regulation	6





## Appendix H

### Storyline

Although half of the students reported not having chosen the English Language Teaching programme as their first choice to study at university and had experienced negative emotions, most students were highly motivated throughout the study period. During the course, although most of the students reported feeling *insecure* and having *diminishing feelings of self-efficacy* after experiencing a negative situation (that was usually caused by being *afraid of the teacher* due to her attitude, oral and written *feedback approach*, and rating *assessment system*), they all seemed to engage in *reflection* in order to manage those negative experiences. Fear was reported as the most pervasive emotion students experienced during the term. Although it may be considered that fear is detrimental to the foreign language learning process, it was reported as having had a positive effect on these students' motivation. *Fear as a motivational force* developed students' *learning awareness, learning and motivational strategies*, which helped them to cope with negative experiences during classroom instruction. Students reported resorting to the use of *affective, metacognitive and social strategies* after experiencing feeling afraid of *making mistakes* because they were afraid of *being mocked by their peers*. This fear of students being *mocked by their peers* was present throughout the 12-week period of this study.

As mentioned above, negative emotions were reported as having two main triggers: the teacher, because of her feedback approach, and a group of mocking students who were more proficient language learners. Although these two triggers had the same effect of making students fearful, the outcomes of these two sources of fear were different. The fear provoked by the teacher was a paralysing force since it reflected students' insecurity and diminishing feelings of self-efficacy. They became immobilised during classroom instruction, and as a consequence, there was very *poor class participation* and *no group cohesion*. This paralysing effect of fear created an ineffective learning environment that led students to make comparisons between teachers and to switch off from the class in which the study was being carried out. It seemed that they may have decided to participate only in an environment where they felt secure and unthreatened. Due to this constant fear that students reported experiencing in the class, they started to make comparisons with the approach of another teacher and which provided them with a space to try to make mistakes and learn. Students reported a very *positive learning environment* in a different class where Teacher 2 encouraged them to participate and to experience feelings of self-efficacy during learning activities, as she showed genuine interest in their personal and academic lives. With

Teacher 1, however, most students reported feeling intimidated by her attitude and gestures that were conveying a different meaning from her words.

Students were also making constant comparisons between themselves and the more proficient language learners and, although they felt insecure and perceived English learning to be difficult, a competitive environment seemed to have developed in this group of language learners. Students reported realising that their classmates' proficiency in English was due to their investment of years in the task, since these students had spent their secondary and preparatory school years taking extracurricular English classes. Thus, the fear caused by mockery was transformed into a positive motivational force which led the students to make greater use of motivational strategies. Students exercised *emotional self-regulation* by setting aside negative emotions and replacing them with *positive self-encouragement*, since all of them were *determined to succeed*. In spite of having experienced fear over the whole term, students started to *develop resilience* towards fear and a *sense of responsibility* in their *foreign language learning process*. This positive effect of fear was supported by the socio-cultural background of the students which lends a high *cultural value to education* that is, in turn, strengthened by the *students' determination to succeed*. Getting a *university degree* was regarded as a means to secure a *better economic future* since they had encountered *economic limitations* in their lives. In addition, the Mexican socio-cultural context places a great emphasis on family values and this makes students feel they have a *financial commitment to their parents* in the future. The interplay between culture and socio-economic background seems to have had a strong role in influencing students to turn those negative emotions into positive motivational energy.

The more humanistic practices in Teacher 2's class proved to be beneficial for students' language learning processes since, by feeling that the learning environment was not threatening, students were participating in class and having constant positive emotions towards the activities and their progress. These positive emotions resulted in *feelings of self-efficacy* that *reloaded the students' motivational energy* and helped them to *develop resilience* while in class with Teacher 1. By having the opportunity to experience a different learning environment with Teacher 2, students' motivation continued to strengthen day after day, which led some to feel they had to repay Teacher 2 for her efforts by trying harder and being better prepared while in her class. The combination of experiencing a learning environment which they perceived as supporting their learning needs with the influence of a socio-cultural context which places a high value on the completion of a university degree appears to have contributed to students' development of resilience and the maintenance of their high level of motivation in spite of experiencing negative emotions.

## **Appendix I**

### **Participants' portraits**

#### **Akira**

Female (19 years old)

She reported being afraid of being laughed at by her peers. She chose the ELT programme because she wants to be an English teacher. She recognised that she did not participate in class as often as she desired to because of her peers. She recognised negative emotions as positive because they made her reflect and look for ways to improve her language learning process.

#### **Angela**

Female (19 years old)

Reported being nervous and afraid because she didn't understand what was explained or what was asked of her. She described resorting to self-regulatory strategies to help her learning process. Her family was a very important motivator in her university studies. She always referred to her parents' encouragement and how she wanted to make them proud.

#### **Angelica**

Female (21 years old)

Compared herself to peers and felt frustrated and angry when she saw others speaking fluently in class activities. From a rural background, she revealed that her moral obligation towards her parents was what maintained her motivation at a good level. In the middle of the study period she started to minimise some situations and recognised that she had to go through that in order to be successful.

#### **Angie**

Female (23 years old)

Had left school some years ago and decided to return to her studies. Chose the ELT programme because she thought there was a good chance to get a good job in the tourism sector. She didn't compare herself to her peers but was aware of the proficiency level difference among the group. She felt really angry about a misunderstanding over marks with T1. She reported feeling bored with T1's class topics and activities. She recognised feeling intimidated by the teacher and avoided speaking in English because she felt insecure about her oral ability.

### **Aserina**

Female (19 years old)

Although the ELT programme was not her first choice, she seemed very determined to finish the degree. However, she was constantly worried about getting good marks. She realised early in the term that her peers were more proficient and this caused her to be nervous and insecure when participating in class. She revealed that her peers' proficiency encouraged her to practice more in order to get to the same level as her peers.

### **David**

Male (21 years old)

He was the only advanced student who agreed to participate in the study. He was experiencing financial problems that made his attendance and concentration difficult. He felt motivated because of the financial limitations he was experiencing. He revealed feeling bored and tired of helping lower level students in class activities. He recognised the negative learning environment in class with T1. He blamed the teacher's lack of interpersonal skills.

### **Dayana**

Female (18 years old)

She registered for the ELT programme because she had no other options. She wanted to go to study in Mexico City but it was not possible because of her parents' financial limitations. She had a lot of problems and fights at home. She tried to forget her problems by trying to concentrate in class but this was not always possible. She revealed feeling insecure and not understanding anything during the first four weeks of the study. She resorted to learning strategies to improve her language proficiency.

### **Enrique**

Male (21 years old)

He was experiencing romantic problems and this was distracting him from his studies. He didn't compare himself to his peers since he had a good language level. He reported not feeling intimidated but angry at T1's attitude. He considered T1 to be very strict, and perceived her body language as negative. He reacted strongly towards T1's feedback approach. His attitude changed drastically after the feedback event and deteriorated day after day. He referred to the environment difference with T2. He felt comfortable and happy when participating in T2's class because of the humanistic approach that she exercised.

### **Esperanza**

Female (18 years old)

She wanted to be an elementary school teacher but her parents were not able to support her studies in another city. She considered that by becoming an English teacher she could fulfil her dream of teaching young children. She found language classes challenging but was trying hard. She found T1 intimidating and unpredictable. She tried to approach T1 on different occasions but the result was always negative. After getting good marks she felt more secure and her participation in class improved.

### **Hanna**

Female (19 years old)

She was very shy and very insecure. She was afraid of her peers mocking her because she recognised having a very low L2 level. She never mentioned feeling intimidated by T1. She was from a rural background and was experiencing financial problems. The fear of failing the course made her look for strategies to help her learning process. Small achievements made her happy and re-energised her motivation.

### **Isabel**

Female (19 years old)

Isabel was from a nearby rural town. She was having difficulties in adapting to living alone for the first time. Her parents could not afford all her expenses so she was working as a domestic worker in a house. She worked the whole evening and had not many hours to study. She was always tired and doing homework at the last minute. However, she found her peers' proficiency was a positive motivational factor because she wanted to push herself.

### **Jaded**

Female (19 years old)

She wanted to be a doctor but registered for the ELT programme because of her parents' desires. Felt insecure, and doubts about being in the right degree started to emerge in the very first weeks. She didn't compare herself to her peers but was aware of the mockery. After the writing task feedback incident her attitude changed towards T1. She reported feeling unconfident in class with T1. After some weeks she revealed that she did not pay any attention to the mockery anymore; she decided to concentrate on her improvement and started to make use of self-regulatory strategies.

### **Jane**

Female (19 years old)

The writing task feedback increased her insecurity when participating in class. She had problems at home with her parents and these interfered with her concentration and participation in class. She reported feeling uncomfortable in class with T1 because of her peers. She resorted to the use of self-regulatory strategies to help her learning process. In her journal entries in the last four weeks of the term she recognised that she needed to participate more in class so that she could lose the fear of speaking in front of the class.

### **Jimmy**

Male (19 years old)

He was afraid of making mistakes all the time because of his peers. He experienced two negative events in class. He compared himself to his peers in class activities and exams. He made use of self-regulatory strategies to motivate himself. His mother was a strong motivator since he felt he had to help her in the future. He had financial problems and this was also a motivational influence that obstructed his daily performance in classes.

### **Kenya**

Female (19 years old)

She compared herself to her peers and felt helpless because she was not as fluent as them. She reported being motivated to speak as fluently as her classmates. She recognised her poor class participation was due to her peers' mockery. She felt angry at T1 because of her being so strict and rigid. The teacher's rigidity caused diminishing feelings of self-efficacy. She reported being upset about T1's facial expressions in class. She reported feeling comfortable and enjoying T2's class.

### **Luna**

Female (19 years old)

She didn't compare herself to her peers and didn't acknowledge the language level differences in the class. She referred to T1's class as very dynamic and motivating. She seemed to enjoy T1's classes. She got very angry at herself after the writing feedback event because she didn't make her best effort. Although she was nervous and afraid because she didn't understand everything that was said or explained, she expressed being motivated to try her best to improve her oral ability. She didn't feel intimidated by T1 but reported feeling distress about making mistakes in front of the class.

**Natalia**

Female (18 years old)

She compared herself to her peers and felt insecure. She valued being called by her name and this sparked her motivation. She didn't report feeling intimidated by T1. She reported having developed motivation for the ELT programme despite it not being her first choice. She revealed that her participation in class depended on how the teacher related to her.

**Ricardo**

Male (18 years old)

He reported feeling upset about his peers mocking him. He reported being upset about T1's attitude, which he considered negative and not supportive of students' needs. He reacted very strongly after the writing feedback event. He considered that T1's attitude developed a very negative atmosphere. He was always motivated and willing to participate in spite of this. He considered the environment in T2's class to be very supportive as opposed to the one in T1's class. He was willing to participate because he recognised that this was the only way to improve.